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SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

13-14-15 MAY 1953

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The Proceedings

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INTRODUCTION

REMOTE STORAGE
BOOKSTACKS OFFICE

The Second General Assembly of the International Press Institute was held May 13 to 15, 1953, at Church House, Westminster, London. The complete program was as follows:

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13

Morning Session **THE WORK OF THE INSTITUTE**

Address by Lester Markel, Chairman of the Executive Board.

Report on the past year, and presentation of the program and budget for the coming year, by E.J.B. Rose, Director of the Institute.

Discussion of the policy of the Institute.

Luncheon in Hoare Guest speaker:

Memorial Hall

**Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein,
K.G., G.C.B.**

Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Afternoon Session **THE FLOW OF THE NEWS SURVEY**

Interim findings from the research conducted by the Institute during the past year into foreign news coverage in the press of the United States, Western Europe and India—members of the project staff.

THURSDAY, MAY 14

Morning Session **HOW GOOD IS THE FLOW OF THE NEWS
AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE IT?**

Chairman:

Erwin D. Canham, Editor, *The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston

Speakers:

J. M. Lucker, Editor, *De Volkskrant*, Amsterdam

Roger Massip, Foreign Editor, *Le Figaro*, Paris

Joseph Newman, London Correspondent, *The New York Herald Tribune*

Terence Prittie, Bonn Correspondent,
Manchester Guardian

Luncheon in Hoare Guest speaker:

Memorial Hall **Dr. Konrad Adenauer**

Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany

Afternoon Session Chairman:

Urs Schwarz, Foreign Editor, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Zürich

Speakers:

Walton Cole, Editor, Reuters

Alan Gould, Executive Editor, The Associated Press, New York

Robert Mengin, Directeur, Agence France-Presse, London

George H. Pipal, General European Manager, The United Press, London

J. Kingsbury Smith, European General Manager, International News Service, Paris

FRIDAY, MAY 15

Morning Session **THE STATE OF THE PRESS**

Chairman:

Eljas Erkko, Editor, *Helsingin Sanomat*, Helsinki

Speakers:

Dr. Henry Steele Commager, Professor of History,
Columbia University, New York

Bertrand de Jouvenel, writer and political scientist

The Hon. Sir Harold Nicolson, K.C.V.O., C.M.G.,
author and critic

Dr. Wilhelm Röpke, Professor of Economics, Graduate
Institute of International Studies, Geneva.

Luncheon in Hoare Guest speaker:

Memorial Hall **Sir Benegal Narsing Rau, C.I.E.**

Judge, The International Court, The Hague

Afternoon Session **THE INSTITUTE'S POLICY AND PROGRAM**

Chairman:

Lester Markel, Chairman of the Executive Board

Election of Executive Board and Chairman.

Place of the 1954 General Assembly.

Discussion of the policy of the Institute (continued
from the first session).

Approval of the program for the coming year.

The following summary of the Proceedings of the Second General Assembly does not include the luncheon addresses by Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery, Dr. Konrad Adenauer and Sir Benegal Nar-sing Rau.

The complete text of the discussions at the two business meetings and four professional panels exceeded 150,000 words in length. In the summaries of the contributions by the speakers and by members from the floor, there has been no attempt to use verbatim quotations, but wherever considerations of space permitted, the speaker's own words have been chosen. Omission of any questions and comments in the summary of discussion from the floor has been made both for brevity and in order to keep the sequence of topics.

Speakers at each session are fully identified only once.

THE WORK OF THE INSTITUTE

MORNING SESSION—WEDNESDAY, MAY 13

Business Meeting

Chairman: LESTER MARKEL, Chairman of the Executive Board

In his welcoming address, MR. LESTER MARKEL, Chairman of the Executive Board, said that the two years of the Institute's existence had not been easy ones, but they had seen an ideal become a reality. In spite of the difficulties and detours, the idea of the Institute was strongly in being. He realized how much of a sacrifice members had made to leave their desks in these momentous and uncertain days.

The meeting had large problems to consider, requiring full discussion and firm decisions, but first he wished to report a few highlights from the Institute's record. Membership totaled 674, distributed through 32 countries. The Secretariat had established relations with editors in all parts of the free world both through direct contact and indirectly through IPI REPORT and the questionnaires used in surveys. The Institute had brought about meetings of editors with editors and was surveying such large problems in international journalism as censorship and regulation, the improvement of newspapers in underdeveloped areas and the exchange of journalists.

During the past year it had been carrying out a huge job of research in the flow of the news project. Most importantly, the Institute had had a considerable impact on journalism in general. Its meetings and surveys had induced self-examination in many areas of newspaper work and editors were taking a fresh look at themselves and their procedures. Though it was commonly accepted that journalism was too inexact a science or art to evolve a specific philosophy, the Institute's work had indicated lines along which definite studies of editorial responsibility and practice could be made.

Certain observations and criticisms had been made of the Institute's activity thus far. Some felt that the interest of many members was too casual and that the National Committees had not been developed as fully as they might have been. There were several immediate answers to these criticisms. First, most editors were, rightly, so much occupied with

the daily problems of newspaper production that they could not spare much time for outside causes. Second, progress was inevitably slow with a new and unique organization whose work demanded a good deal of education about this kind of endeavor. Third, the Institute was in competition with organizations which offered all kinds of inducements, such as free passage, meals and entertainment, to those who attended their meetings. Nevertheless, he still felt that the response to the Institute should be greater.

There were also criticisms from outside, the main one being the charge of American domination. It was true that the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations had supplied the funds for the three-year experiment, but they would be delighted to have the financial burden assumed elsewhere. They had contributed because they believed in the idea of the Institute as a genuinely international organization and at no time had they exercised any control over the Institute's activities.

The flow of the news project had also been criticized on the ground that it was not of vital importance to editors generally and therefore should not be the main concern of the Institute. In his view, this criticism arose from a misunderstanding of the basic purposes and program of the Institute.

Basic Idea of Institute

If there was any validity at all in the idea of the Institute, it was found in this reasoning: (1) the basic problem of the world was understanding; (2) there could not be understanding—in other words, sound public opinion—unless there was good information; (3) a newspaper was the most important medium of information; (4) therefore, if a better flow of information could be achieved, there would be greater understanding among nations.

There had never been a time in history when international understanding was more urgent, but the nations of the world were not getting accurate pictures of one another and much of the foreign news printed was not understandable to the average reader. This was a task which the newspapers of the free world must tackle.

The problem of making foreign news understandable to the ordinary reader involved the subject of interpretation of the news. Interpretation, or background (he made no difference), was the deeper sense of the news. It gave meaning to the bare facts—it was, in short, setting, sequence and, above all, significance. There was a tremendous difference between

interpretation and opinion. The first was objective, or as objective as human beings could make it; the second was subjective.

To report that the Kremlin was launching a peace offensive was *news*.

To explain why the Kremlin was doing so was *interpretation*.

To state that any Kremlin peace offer should be rejected out of hand was *opinion*.

Interpretation was an essential part of the news columns; opinion should be confined, almost religiously, to editorials. Many editors believed that the moment one departed from so-called facts and attempted explanation, one moved immediately into the field of opinion. This was an idea based on a false assumption. The most "objective" of reporters had the task, first of all, of selecting among the facts he would report. Then he decided which of those selected he should play up in his lead. Then the editor at home had to decide where to display the story. Each of these decisions was an exercise of judgment and was, in essence, no different from the judgment required for interpretation.

The European press had long recognized the vital importance of interpretation, though many of the European editors drew no distinction between interpretation and opinion. In the United States interpretive writing was on the increase. It was an especially important trend in the news agencies, which supplied such a large share of the foreign news going into the American press.

Task of Information

The task of good interpretive writing was a difficult one, and there were possible dangers in it. One of the grave problems was to find men capable of doing the job. Reporting of greater depth, greater integrity and greater perspective was required. Yet only if such reporting was developed could the press justify its existence. In these confusing days, the newspaper could not perform its primary function—the task of information—unless it not only provided the facts but interpreted them.

The flow of the news project was designed to discover why the news among nations was not better and what could be done about it. The study had interested American editors and by the same token it should interest editors in all free lands. That was why this kind of continuous study of foreign news seemed to him almost the primary task of the Institute. Nevertheless, this kind of research work was not the only function of the Institute.

Turning to the program for the coming year, he spoke first on the question of finances. He thought there was general agreement that any institute so vitally concerned with newspaper problems as was the International Press Institute should be sustained by the newspaper industry rather than by outside contributions. While the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations might be willing, at the end of the three-year experimental period, to make grants for special projects, he felt that the basic budget should be the concern of the newspaper industry itself.

Publishers' Support

Since membership fees alone would not suffice to maintain ordinary operations, he asked all members to explore the possibilities of obtaining support from newspaper publishers and organizations. It might be useful to include publishers in some way in the Institute, but with the full understanding that the organization should concern itself only with editorial problems. Apart from the financial consideration, it might be a great boon to journalism if editor and publisher became more closely related through the Institute.

There was another way in which national newspaper strength might be developed and so aid international journalism. He dreamed of a world in which national press institutes, constituted of editors and other persons interested in editorial problems, would deal with internal editorial problems and exchange ideas with each other through a medium such as the International Press Institute. He had urged the various national chairmen to explore the possibility of such organizations.

The second important task in the coming year was the implementation of the flow of the news study. This report would be completed by early autumn. By then he believed that the basic difficulties in the news flow and general ways to correct them would be indicated. During the coming year these questions would be further explored in seminars and in regional and interregional meetings.

The program of the Institute would be expanded in other directions. IPI REPORT had demonstrated its possibilities as a journal of international journalism and would continue to do so. The development of the Press Center as a clearing house for information about the world's press would proceed. Contacts between the Secretariat and members would be increased. As for other problems with which the Institute would be concerned, he left it to the Director to go into further detail.

MR. E. J. B. ROSE, the Director, then reported. The Institute, he said, now had members and National Committees in practically every country of the world where the press was free. Applications to form committees in some countries where there was a dictatorship had been rejected. Wherever possible, secretaries to National Committees had been appointed, as well as rapporteurs, to keep the Institute informed on press developments for the monthly bulletin. This network of correspondents, however, needed to be extended to give a really world-wide service of information.

In the past year the Institute had published its study of the News from Russia, which had been widely reported and commented on, but its main energies and resources had been devoted to the flow of the news research. This had meant a considerable temporary expansion of the Institute, not only in Zurich but also in New York and Madras. The whole of the project in the three centers had been under the control of the Associate Director, W. McNeil Lowry, who would be reporting that afternoon.

The monthly magazine of the Institute, IPI REPORT, under the editorship of Robert Noble, had just completed its first year. The bulletin was designed to be a forum of opinion on editorial questions and a report on the contemporary press throughout the world. Its third purpose was to direct attention to restrictions on freedom and the measures taken to fight such restrictions. The Secretariat would like IPI REPORT to be much more widely read. Many journalists who were not editors had taken out subscriptions and it had been found that these men were extremely interested in the Institute's work. Members could subscribe for additional copies for their staffs and he urged that this be done.

Work of Press Center

Behind IPI REPORT was the Press Center which, during the past year, had been reading and cutting 30 newspapers each day. This work, supplemented by press cutting services in Europe, the U.S. and Australia, was building up a record on the press which he hoped would become a unique source of information. The Press Center was also collecting a library of standard works on the press and particulars of press legislation, censorship and so on. The Press Center had a short and long term value. Not only did it serve the bulletin and research work, but it was also at the service of members, from whom a great many inquiries had already been received.

During the year the Secretariat had embarked on a study of censorship and other restrictions throughout the world. National Committees and foreign correspondents were being asked to supplement the information already available in the Press Center. Other tasks started during the year were an investigation of existing schemes for exchanges of journalists in order to discover what facilities were available, what the gaps were and what kind of exchange was most needed, and also a study of the needs of the press in underdeveloped areas.

The New Program

For the coming year, the Institute was starting with a budgetary balance of \$130,000 after making full provision for the completion of the flow of the news research. The new program was as follows.

First, the reports on the flow of the news inquiry would be published in the autumn, and it was intended to follow up their findings and examine with the help of members what could be done to implement them. It was hoped to call conferences to discuss the recommendations. Editors would also be invited to make a daily examination of agency copy and their treatment of it to determine if any changes had taken place in reporting and presenting foreign news. The results of this continuing study of the flow of the news would be reported.

Additionally, an inquiry would be conducted into the news from the Middle East, along the lines of the Russian survey of the previous year. The area had been chosen because editors considered it either underreported or misreported and because it presented special obstacles to news collection. It was also planned to call regional conferences between editors of pairs of neighboring countries—for example, the United States and Britain, France and Germany, and Greece and Turkey—to discuss what could be done to improve press relations between their countries.

Secondly, the promotion of the exchange of journalists would begin. It had been found that very few exchanges which gave journalists an opportunity to work on newspapers in a foreign country were taking place. The only sizeable scheme was run by the U.S. State Department in conjunction with American newspapers. It was the Institute's belief, however, that exchange schemes should, where possible, be independent of governments and be run by the profession itself. It was proposed to start at the current Assembly with a modest program of exchanges between countries with a common language. The exchange proposed was for a

three-month period, the journalist to work fully on the host newspaper, his salary being continued by the parent newspaper. The Institute would act as a clearing house for all such offers.

Thirdly, in line with the request to the Executive Board, at the 1952 Assembly, to consider how the International Press Institute could best offer help to the press of underdeveloped areas, much information and advice had been collected from some of these countries, but the information was still insufficient to recommend any course of action. It was the feeling of the Executive Board that the preparatory work should be continued, with a view to operating a pilot scheme for training in one country. The Institute was prepared to invite men with special knowledge of one area or another to serve as an advisory committee in this field. The Executive Board would meet again in December and the Secretariat hoped to make definite recommendations by then.

Fourthly, publication of IPI REPORT would be continued and the Press Center further developed. Studies on censorship and restrictions would also be published.

Finally, the organization of the National Committees would be strengthened by the appointment of secretaries and rapporteurs, where necessary, to help chairmen. For this purpose subscription revenue would be used in the countries where it was collected. These Committees were the vital link between the work of the Secretariat and the participation of the members.

Discussion from the Floor

In opening the meeting for discussion, the Chairman pointed out that the final session on Friday afternoon would also be devoted to business affairs of the Institute.

MR. ERWIN D. CANHAM (*Christian Science Monitor*, Boston) asked the Chairman for further details of what the Executive Board had in mind in suggesting that publishers might be approached for financial support for the Institute. Was it merely a question of seeking random support from individual publishers or was it thought that a category of quasi-membership should be set up by which a newspaper, as an economic enterprise, would contribute a set sum?

The Chairman replied that the Executive Board had been thinking in the terms of the first alternative. The plan was to have the National Chairman in each country approach publishers and see what support could be

obtained. After six months the Executive Board would meet again to hear reports from the National Chairmen. It was calculated that the basic amount needed for the Secretariat was approximately \$60,000 a year, apart from any grants for special projects. As far as the membership of publishers was concerned, it was a delicate question. He would welcome the idea of including publishers as associate members, but the Institute must be kept as a forum for the discussion of editorial problems.

In reply to a question from Mr. Canham as to how far the basic amount could be met from subscription revenue, the Director explained that at present this revenue was \$15,000, but the greater part of this was ploughed back to strengthen the organization of National Committees.

Newspaper Membership

Mr. Canham asked whether the Executive Board had considered the possibility of putting membership on a basis whereby a newspaper held the membership and designated the editor as the individual member. If this was done, the newspaper's membership fee might be set at a figure roughly adequate to provide the financial support the Institute needed. Additionally, there could be membership for individuals who were not representing their newspaper as such.

The Chairman replied that, since it was assumed that most of the editors' fees were paid by their publishers, the newspapers were, in effect, supporting the Institute already.

Thus it was a question of increasing the publishers' contribution. He added that he would not rule out the possibility of contributions from newspaper organizations.

MR. FRITZ MOLDEN (*Die Presse*, Vienna) thought that it would only be fair if a large newspaper, or its representative, paid a higher fee than a member from a small newspaper. He believed that there were a number of larger newspapers in the world not only able but also willing to pay more, and he suggested that this idea should be discussed by National Committees. The Institute was very much concerned with research, and research institutes had always been paid for by the industry for which they worked. He thought that, since publishers derived at least as much benefit from the Institute's research as anybody else, some of them at least could be persuaded to contribute. He suggested that approaches should be made to publishers' organizations in the various countries to see whether such cooperation could be arranged.

The Chairman said that he was in full agreement and that the plan being followed was very much along the lines of Mr. Molden's suggestions.

SIR LLOYD DUMAS (*The Advertiser*, Adelaide) said that he would speak for the moment as a publisher. He thought that publishers recognized the value of the Institute as the only organization able to speak for the whole press of the free world. There were two main jobs that the Institute could do. One was to expand information facilities and help other countries to obtain the same measure of press freedom that free countries enjoyed. The second was to ensure the protection of the freedom of the press in those countries where the Institute was represented. Press freedom had been challenged in the United Nations. Australia had been the first country to recognize the threat in the Convention on Freedom of Information drawn up there and had had some difficulty in imparting its views to the United States and Great Britain.

Publishers believed that there was great value in having an organization like the Institute, equipped with a trained Secretariat which was alert to come at once to the defense of the press wherever it was challenged. He did not think that there would be much difficulty in persuading the other publishers of Australia that they should contribute to the support of the Institute. He hoped that more and more the Institute would come to be a publisher-financed and editor-controlled organization.

Threats to Freedom

The Chairman asked Sir Lloyd if he would give his opinion on the question of what exactly the Institute could do in the case of an international threat to the freedom of the press. What should it do after investigating and whom did it represent?

Sir Lloyd Dumas replied that if any issue arose which, in the opinion of the Secretariat, seemed to involve a serious threat to the industry, the Secretariat could submit the question to all countries where there were National Committees and seek their advice. On the other hand, if any member country felt that there was such a danger arising, it could approach the Secretariat and ask it to communicate with all the other National Committees. There was no such machinery in existence when the Convention on Freedom of Information came before the United Nations and there had been great difficulty in arousing a sense of the danger in other countries and persuading the press to unite to fight the Convention. This machinery was now supplied by the Institute. If there was doubt

whether the freedom of the press was being menaced and differing views were held by the press in free countries, there was still a value in finding out the attitude of the whole free press of the world.

The Chairman pointed out that certain difficulties were inherent in the situation. The Institute represented more than 30 countries. Between the group of countries that opposed any kind of regulation whatever on the freedom of the press and the group comprising Russia and its satellites, which believed in full regulation, there was a further group of UN member countries which subscribed to the principles of freedom of the press but did not define freedom entirely in the terms of the first group. That was why there had been hesitation in taking action on the Convention on Freedom of Information. He asked Mr. Canham, who had taken part in the United Nations discussions, whether this presentation of the problem was not correct.

Mr. Canham agreed that the categories outlined were correct. Nevertheless, he thought that newspapermen of the free world were much more united in their attitude to the Convention than were the various governments' representatives. There would be a much better possibility of reaching clear agreement in professional terms in a forum like the Institute than there would be, for some time to come, at any international political inter-governmental meeting. That was why Sir Lloyd Dumas was right in describing the Institute as a great tool with which to work.

The Chairman asked Sir Lloyd Dumas for his views on what specific action the Institute should take. Supposing the Secretariat had been in existence when the Convention on Freedom of Information came up at the United Nations and supposing it had reached the conclusion, after investigation, that this was a dangerous convention. What then? Should there be a vote of members? If there were and a majority voted against the Convention, should this be announced as the position of the IPI or should the Secretariat merely distribute the information to members?

Importance of Machinery

Sir Lloyd Dumas replied that the very fact that in such a case the Institute studied the problem and reported to members would be of value. The Institute could not move if there was a substantial block of members, or even a minority, opposed to action, but the important thing was that there was now machinery for acquainting National Committees all over the world with trends of newspaper opinion, and this was something new.

Now it was for individual National Committees or newspapers to take action with full information on what was going on in other countries, whereas previously those members who were far from the center of things had not been aware of much that was going on until it was too late.

The Chairman suggested a possible procedure in such cases. The Secretariat would investigate and where it found what it considered an infringement of freedom of the press, it would report to the Executive Board and consult with it on whether its information should be distributed.

UN Press Surveys

Mr. Canham then said that he wished to raise a related question—that of the Institute's interest in and relations to fact-finding investigations about the press carried out by inter-governmental organizations, such as the current survey on freedom of information by the UN rapporteur, Mr. Salvador P. Lopez. He asked whether or not the Institute should seek recognition as a private international organization, so that its views could be officially cited in reports made on such investigations. He himself felt that, since the views brought together in the Institute represented a valid and important area of newspaper thinking and experience, it would be unfortunate if the Institute's opinions were not included. Otherwise the Institute let its views go by default.

Sir Lloyd Dumas's point related to this. Sometimes the views of national newspaper organizations had not been expressed on these important matters. To give an answer to controversial questions might not always be easy, but where did the Institute stand on the question of official relationship with international inter-governmental organizations when they came so close to the wellbeing of the press?

The Chairman said he was glad the question of the Lopez inquiry had been raised. The Institute had received a questionnaire in connection with the inquiry and had answered it. Within a few months Mr. Lopez would be issuing a report, based on replies to the questionnaire and bearing the official imprint of the United Nations. What was the Institute to do in these circumstances? It could not refuse to cooperate and it had given information. The question was a difficult one to resolve so long as the UN dealt with press matters.

Mr. Canham replied that, whatever the merits of Mr. Lopez' ultimate report, he did not believe that newspapermen would improve the quality of United Nations reports or protect themselves from possible misunder-

standing and misrepresentation in such reports merely by holding aloof. It was preferable to cooperate as closely as possible from the inside and try to ensure that the reports published were good. It was possible that the IPI, if it were desirable, might be recognized by the United Nations as a private organization with certain rights and status.

The Chairman asked what kind of recognition it was thought the Institute could have. The Director replied that it could become an officially consulted body. Mr. Canham added that, while the Institute was already consulted unofficially, it was not recognized as representative of international newspaper interests. That status could be obtained if the Institute wished and it would be one stage beyond the present position.

MR. BOLESŁAW WIERZBIANSKI (Free European Press Service, London) supported Mr. Canham's suggestion to seek consultative status at the United Nations. With such status the Institute could ask for a hearing, and the initiative would always be with the Institute.

The Chairman said he was not clear about exactly what was meant by recognition as a consultative body.

MR. V. K. NARASIMHAN (*The Hindu*, Madras) said that some non-official international organizations were given a special status at the United Nations and were consulted on matters affecting them. For example, suppose there were a sub-committee meeting on freedom of the press, the Institute, if it had consultative status, would be invited to send an observer, who could take part in the discussions.

Mr. Canham said it was difficult to say what concrete advantages would be gained by having consultative status, but he believed there was a certain value in being that much nearer the inside.

The Chairman, summing up the discussion, said it was clear that the Secretariat ought to explore what could be done in the matter.

Contributions and Fees

MR. J. KINGSBURY SMITH (International News Service, Paris) intervened to refer back to the suggestion that publishers should make a substantial contribution to the Institute through the membership fees of their editors. He asked whether this plan might not tend to restrict the freedom of judgment and action of the editor in his participation in Institute work and also restrict the number of editors from the same newspaper who might join the Institute. He thought that it would be better to ask the individual newspapers, especially big enterprises, to make a

substantial contribution to the Institute and then have a smaller fee for membership of the editors.

The Chairman thought there was substantial agreement on the last point. Whether the idea of having a publisher make a substantial contribution as his editor's membership fee would restrict the editor's freedom of expression depended on the individual publisher and editor. If a newspaper made a contribution he thought it would be entitled to plural membership of the Institute. The one did not rule out the other.

Underdeveloped Areas

The Chairman then referred the meeting to the passage in the Director's report dealing with help to the press of underdeveloped areas. He said that it was hoped to start one pilot project in the course of the coming year, but he wished to consult the meeting on the amount of attention that could be spared for these areas in view of the large jobs to be done in more developed areas.

MR. PEDRO G. BELTRAN (*La Prensa*, Lima) asked what kind of work could be done in underdeveloped areas.

The Director said that there were two great needs, one of which the Institute could not satisfy at all. This was for up-to-date equipment from printing plant to cameras. The second need was for training in both editorial and production work. It had been suggested that the Institute's best and most economical course of action would be to send a man to a selected territory to conduct training, but it was still not known what facilities existed already.

The Chairman said that he thought that the Institute should act in this matter as an agency for gathering information and indicating what kind of help was needed, in the hope that there would come from the Foundations or elsewhere special appropriations to do a job in some particular area.

Before the meeting adjourned the Director announced that at the next business meeting, on Friday afternoon, there would be balloting for a vacancy on the Executive Board created by the resignation of Herbert Moses (*O Globo*, Rio de Janeiro). The Executive Board's nomination was Giulio de Benedetti (*La Stampa*, Turin). He also announced a meeting of National Committee chairmen on Thursday after the close of the afternoon session.

THE FLOW OF THE NEWS SURVEY

AFTERNOON SESSION—WEDNESDAY, MAY 13

Interim Reports and Discussion

Chairman: LESTER MARKEL, Chairman of the Executive Board

Speakers: W. MCNEIL LOWRY, Associate Director of the Institute
HENNING SINDING-LARSEN, member of the Secretariat
V. K. NARASIMHAN, Assistant Editor, *The Hindu*, Madras

MR. MARKEL said that the second General Assembly was devoted largely to the theme that a prime way of bringing about better understanding between nations was to improve the flow of international news. This, the basic idea of the Institute, was also the idea of the flow of the news survey launched by the IPI in September 1952. He proposed to call on some of the staff of the survey for what were only interim reports, as the Institute was in the middle of an important phase of the project—the evaluation of the news flow. The reports would be followed the next day by discussion of the two large questions with which the survey was concerned—how good was the flow of news and what could be done to improve it.

MR. LOWRY made the first report. He began by defining the objectives of the survey as compilation of the first comprehensive analysis of the nature and extent of the news flow; indication of the areas of ignorance in one country about another; indication of possible causes for these areas of ignorance; indication of possible methods for improving the flow of news; and increased cooperation among editors and between editors and news agencies.

The survey had been divided into three studies—a study of the flow of news into and out of the United States; a study of the flow between Germany and seven other countries of Western Europe and a study of the flow between India and the West.

The inquiry had raised four main questions—what were the sources, nature and extent of the flow of foreign news and what use was made of

it by newspapers; what was the value of that news; what could be done to improve it; and what was the reader's attitude to coverage of foreign news by his newspaper.

The answer to the first question had required a quantitative survey and for this purpose the research staffs, working in New York, Zurich and Madras, had made a daily examination of 178 newspapers (105 in the U.S., 48 in Western Europe and 25 in India) for a selected week in each of the four months of October, November and December 1952 and January 1953. The survey staffs had analyzed 45 daily wire service reports for the same periods to study the foreign news that news agencies were supplying to the sample newspapers.

For the answer to the question "How good is the flow of news?" the Institute had turned and was still turning to a variety of sources, seeking the views of hundreds of editors, as well as of agencies and of foreign correspondents. Factual summaries of the news flowing from one country to another in the period of one month, prepared by the IPI project staffs in Zurich and New York, had been sent, with the clippings on which they were based, to appropriate foreign correspondents for analysis and evaluation. These correspondents' reports would in turn be sent to editors for their analysis.

To answer the third question "What can be done to improve the news flow?" questionnaires had been sent out seeking editors' views about agency copy and the qualifications of foreign correspondents and of deskmen handling foreign copy. Agencies had also been asked for their views on the presentation of foreign news by newspapers.

Finally, by means of contracts with the American Institute of Public Opinion and its affiliates in four other countries, a survey was being made of readership of foreign news, to determine the attitude of the reader towards foreign news and its presentation and his suggestions for its improvement. In reports later in the year, the Institute would present in detail the results of the whole survey.

The American Survey

After this sketch of the general procedure, Mr. Lowry turned to a report on the American part of the survey, dealing first with the factual material, second with its evaluation and finally with suggestions that had been made for improving foreign news coverage.

He started with some statistics. Almost three-quarters of all the foreign

news in the American newspapers examined was regularly supplied by the news agencies. About 12 per cent of it came from special or staff correspondents and the remainder from syndicates and other pooled services. The most extensive use by a newspaper of any one agency's foreign report ranged between 25 and 30 per cent. The amount of foreign news printed by newspapers varied from 1.75 to 22.6 per cent of the text space, without advertising and certain permanent newspaper features. The areas of the world reported showed a consistent pattern in the four weeks. Ten countries made two-thirds of the foreign news, with the Korean war theater leading all other areas. Among these ten for all four weeks were also the United Kingdom, France, West Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and Austria. Others appearing in the top ten in one or more of the weeks were Czechoslovakia, the Philippines, Indo-China, Australia, Iran, East Germany, Morocco and Mexico. If international organizations like the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization were taken together and considered a separate area for foreign news, then this area would lead the others in amount. This was the most significant change in the nature of the foreign news flow in the past generation.

Requests for Better Coverage

The pattern of usage of foreign stories in the American newspapers examined followed the pattern of wire agency coverage, except that one of the four agencies supplying the American press brought the Soviet Union into the top ten countries and another supplied also extensive coverage of India and Kenya. A considerable number of American editors had cited Canada and India as areas from which they desired more agency coverage. It was therefore interesting to note that India did not appear in the list of the ten top countries covered in any of the four weeks, whereas Canada appeared in all four weeks. The two other areas most frequently named as requiring more coverage were Latin America and South East Asia.

In the kind of foreign news selected, agencies and newspaper editors in the United States again followed a generally consistent pattern. War, politics and foreign relations subjects accounted for more than half of the stories covered by agencies and used by newspapers, with foreign "human interest" stories ranking fourth.

The subjects least covered by news agencies were the arts and social measures, and the newspapers showed the same trend, even though about

one-third of the American editors polled by the Institute said that the agencies were giving them too little news of cultural life. About the same number of editors wanted more news of education and science and more human interest stories.

The survey staff were in the middle of the process of evaluating the picture of other countries made by this flow of news in the American press and the final results of the inquiry would have an important effect on the points which they could make at this stage. The principal tentative conclusion was that the general picture supplied by the flow of news was often far from complete and many important events were covered only by a series of small items lacking interpretation and continuity in their presentation. A rather significant proportion of these stories, even on serious subjects, emphasized the traditional news theme of conflict and disturbance.

Mr. Lowry took as an example the picture of France in the American press. He quoted an experienced French correspondent in New York, who found "the coverage of France in the American press generally objective, spotty and incomplete ... a Frenchman in a medium-sized American city will be able to follow the main events in France but they will often look out of focus." This correspondent believed that news agencies were much less at fault than newspaper editors. Agency stories almost always contained the minimum background reference material from which an editor could build up his story to make the news significant, but the editors seemed to prefer to keep only the leading paragraphs and chop off the rest.

The end result, according to this French correspondent, was that French news as presented in the American press "creates more distrust than confidence; it accentuates the differences rather than brings together peoples of the same civilization and with a common ideal."

Areas of Ignorance

A further significant point was the picture that the newspaper reader was getting. The preliminary survey in the United States showed important areas of ignorance in the average reader's knowledge of foreign events. More important, the reader was reading only a fraction of the foreign news presented. Another readership survey in the States showed that more than half the readers approached thought that their newspapers were doing a good job of foreign news coverage and only a fraction

wanted to see national and local coverage reduced to provide more space for foreign news stories.

Recommendations from editors, agencies, foreign correspondents and newspaper readers would ultimately be reported by the Institute, but certain recommendations had already been made by American editors. The commonest suggestion was for more interpretive material in foreign reporting. The survey showed that 80 per cent of American editors believed that interpretation was an essential part of a news agency's job, and a large majority showed no strong fear that interpretation by the news agencies would lead to editorializing. The other fifth declared that they preferred not to risk editorializing from the agencies.

Suggested Improvements

Other recommendations from American editors were for more stories conveying a "well-rounded picture of life" in the country covered, with less about political figures and more about the other people; more attractive, readable and understandable writing; greater efforts to combat censorship abroad; wider geographical coverage by the agencies; tailoring of the foreign news report to concentrate on stories having "significance"; and improvement in training foreign correspondents and deskmen handling foreign news.

About half the American editors reporting to the Institute found one or more shortcomings in the quality of foreign correspondents. Typical shortcomings cited were too great preoccupation with scoops at the expense of explanation of events, and lack of experience and education.

Two criticisms of the handling of foreign news by editors had so far been expressed by news agency executives. They were that editors must find more space for foreign news if they were to do a comprehensive job and that editors and publishers must constantly seek ways of presenting foreign news more successfully.

Other recommendations for improving foreign news coverage had come from foreign correspondents. They were for greater effort to "relate today's news to yesterday's," weekly articles of commentary on topical foreign events by the editor and the frequent assignment abroad of a reporter able to describe effectively the life of the ordinary man.

Suggestions from readers contained in a preliminary report from the American Institute of Public Opinion were that news should be written

in a more understandable way; that more pictures and maps should be used; that more "accurate" news should be given; that there should be more human interest stories and that foreign news stories should be grouped more closely together in make-up.

Views of American editors on the performance of the American press in handling foreign news varied widely, but on the whole they were optimistic. Over one-third of the editors reporting to the Institute called the job being done in this field good to excellent. Another third rated it fair to good, with a variety of qualifications. A minority found it not good or good only in the leading newspapers. Two-thirds said that presentation of foreign news had definitely improved during their own careers in journalism.

Nevertheless the Institute's study raised sharply the question whether the majority of editors were making adequate place for foreign news in their newspapers, and the attitude of general satisfaction expressed by editors was not supported by the facts brought out by the survey. If the study had no other impact, it would undeniably cause newspaper editors throughout the world to look at their papers and ask themselves what picture they were giving their readers of other countries. The Institute survey showed that such an examination was badly needed.

A report on the European part of the survey was then presented by MR. SINDING-LARSEN. The eight European countries intensively studied were Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. In all, 48 newspapers in these countries had been closely examined.

He said that it seemed to be generally agreed among editors in Western Europe that adequate presentation of news from abroad was very important to a sound public opinion. As one prominent Scottish editor had put it: "Interest in foreign news has increased notably since the last war, because it is now more generally recognized that we neglect the study of foreign news at our own peril."

More Foreign Reporting

Belgian, British, Swedish, Swiss and Dutch editors generally contended that the amount of foreign news had increased in the press of their respective countries, and the British attitude was that even newsprint ration-

ing had not prevented better foreign news coverage and a change to brighter presentation. French and Italian editors had given varying answers to the same question and only the Germans had expressed dissatisfaction with the job being done by their press in presenting foreign news. The question was whether this dominant attitude of satisfaction with the performance was supported by the Institute's findings.

Measurements of foreign dateline stories, and editorials and cartoons and pictures dealing with foreign events, in the 48 papers examined, showed that foreign material took from 3 to 42 per cent of the total text available, exclusive of advertisements. The space given to foreign news was dominated by politics and foreign relations. There was then a sharp decline to economic subjects and another decline to defense measures, with gradually decreasing space for other categories of foreign news.

Striking Variations

The United States led all other sections as a source of foreign news for the Western European press, but there was a wide difference among countries in the proportion of U.S. news published, while case histories on the play of American news events showed striking variations among papers. On an average the United Kingdom had the highest percentage of news from the States. Germany was getting more information from the U.S. than from any one of its seven European neighbors, but vast geographical areas of the States were neglected as a source of news. In fact, it was a general impression from reading the European press that almost everything happening in the U.S. took place in Washington, New York, Chicago or one of the other big cities. The type of American news generally predominant in the European press concerned political and foreign relations subjects, though the Swedish and Dutch press gave considerable space to news of art and culture, while the U.K. and Germany used many news items with a human interest.

Mr. Sinding-Larsen then turned to the flow of news between Germany and the seven other countries of Western Europe. In all seven, German news bulked larger than news from any other country except the United States. German newspapers were found generally to contain a comparatively high percentage of European news, mostly from France and the United Kingdom, and politics ranked highest in the kinds of news published.

On the other hand, the total amount of Indian news published in 48

newspapers over four weeks was on average only a little more than one and a half column inches per day per paper.

What was the resulting picture of other countries? Generally, since there were only scraps of news in the European newspapers on many subjects, it would often be very difficult to say that the reader could form a picture of the everyday life of foreign countries, even when political developments were extensively covered. Further, many human interest stories were of the sensational kind which could only serve to unbalance the picture of a country.

Even the picture of the United States, in spite of the high proportion of coverage of American political news given in the press of all eight European countries, suffered in this way. An examination of the picture of the U.S. in a representative group of newspapers in one of these countries showed that stories given important coverage in one paper did not even appear in others. To obtain an idea of American coverage, the picture of the United States during the month of January had been reconstructed from a small but representative group of British papers. An American editor commenting on this summary said that a reader would have had to read all the papers from which the summary was compiled in order to get "a fair idea of what was going on in the United States ... (and) had the Englishman read only one of the papers, he would have had a pretty sorry perspective."

Picture of India

The picture of India in the European press was also incomplete and distorted. European papers in one period of the Institute study generally ignored agency stories on Indian politics, but devoted considerable space to an elephant-snake fight, the sale of elephants and a girl's fast that baffled Indian doctors. In the U.K. throughout the month of October, news of cricket matches dominated the press picture of India except in two newspapers. In the last week of November, news of the Indian five-year plan was mentioned in only one of the 48 European newspapers. A planned parenthood conference in India had produced 60 inches of copy from the agencies but the story appeared, in brief form, in only two of the 48 newspapers.

As for the picture of Germany in the press of the seven other European countries, the fear of a rebirth of Nazism received greater attention than any other subject—a matter of which German editors had complained. They cited as an example British reporting of a speech in October 1952

by the former S.S. General Ramcke, saying that coverage of the speech and its aftermath had involved inaccurate and one-sided reporting.

For instance, they complained that it had not been emphasized that the organizers of the Ramcke meeting tried to stop him during his speech and later denied sharing his views. Further, while reports of the speech were given up to four-column headlines, Chancellor Adenauer's statement that the speech reflected "the confused mind of a man of little importance" was published by only a few British papers. It was also pointed out that newspapers taking great interest in neo-Nazism in Germany neglected the danger of Communism.

Generally, interpretation of foreign news was admitted to be important, but European editors' answers showed that there was a confusion of terms. The majority said that they wanted "background" but that it should be clearly separated from what they called "straight news," without facing up to the problem of making such a separation. An editor in London opposed interpretation by the agencies on the ground that a newspaper did not like to receive interpretation from anonymous sources. The Belgians wanted interpretation but stressed that it should be treated objectively. The French also wanted it, but the Germans and the Dutch were divided in their opinions. The Italians asked for background on special stories, such as the Malenkov accession. Nevertheless, European editors as a whole had not shown a common professional attitude to the relationship of news and interpretation, or any clear idea of how interpretation differed from editorializing.

Need for Condensation

Many European editors recommended the presentation of events in their proper perspective as a way of improving foreign news coverage. Several also suggested that news agencies should condense their material, and one editor complained particularly of lengthy reports of routine political speeches which contained nothing new. Another editor said that before long a newspaper's main function would be similar to that of the Dutch dikes—to protect its readers from the ever-increasing flow of news—and suggested the division of agency services into programs adapted to categories of subscribers.

Asked if they were satisfied with the proportions of agency coverage of various areas of the world, editors frequently mentioned Asia, Australia and South America as areas given inadequate coverage. German editors

listed the Iron Curtain countries but said they realized the present difficulties in obtaining news from the Communist world.

Other suggestions for possible improvement of agency foreign news coverage included more round-ups, with one editor asking for monthly round-ups on areas not covered in the ordinary way; increased accuracy in names and figures; avoidance of sensationalism and bias; better selection of material by the agencies' head offices; and better translations by their local bureaus. One incidental product of the survey was the discovery that a great deal of agency material was not being credited.

Summary of Shortcomings

Summarizing the preliminary findings of the European part of the survey, he said that, while editors clearly attached importance to news of major foreign political developments, it was questionable whether they were giving enough space to news from abroad. As for the important matter of selection, the figures of the Institute survey showed that foreign news coverage was incomplete.

In the majority of European papers studied, the picture of other countries showed communities consisting of politicians and famous people, but with few ordinary human beings. So-called human interest news seemed seldom to merit its name and was often a cover for sensationalism. This might be harmless if it were not for the fact that there was insufficient news of normal life to counterbalance it.

He concluded with a personal generalization framed in the words of a Swedish editor—"I think the general tendency is that the good papers grow better and the bad ones worse."

MR. NARASIMHAN began with a sketch of the position of the Indian press in the new sovereign state of India, which, he reminded his hearers, contained the second largest population in the world under one government. Since the press remained the unrivalled medium in this country for the interpretation of India to the outside world and of the outside world to the Indian people, the way in which it discharged these functions was of as much interest to the rest of the world as it was to India.

A recent estimate that the Indian press comprised over 6,000 newspapers and periodicals gave it the largest number of publications of any country in the world. On the other hand, a great proportion of these

papers were rudimentary and even well established major dailies had circulations which were low by Western standards. The vast majority of newspapers managed with a circulation of less than 10,000, though their influence could not be measured merely by circulation figures. The English press in India was still influential, but Indian-language papers were steadily gaining ground and, since they were reaching levels of readership untouched by the English papers, their role was of crucial significance in the formation of anything like a mass public opinion in India.

The IPI survey, as the first detailed analysis of foreign news in Indian newspapers ever to be made, had aroused considerable interest among editors. At this stage, however, he would present only a review of the factual material of the flow of foreign news to India and some views of Indian editors concerning it.

For the survey, the four principal agencies supplying foreign news to the Indian press and 25 representative newspapers had been selected for study. The selection had been difficult, but it had been decided to choose twelve English-language dailies and thirteen others covering nine different languages.

The first fact brought out by the survey was that, in terms of wordage, the news agencies serving the Indian press devoted considerable attention to the West. The percentage of news carried by the four agencies from the Western areas included in the Institute's survey ranged between 60 and 70 per cent. The United Nations and other international organizations were fairly well covered by three of the agencies (18.8 to 27.5 per cent of foreign news), but the figures also showed that Western Europe outside the United Kingdom was given an average coverage by all the agencies of less than five per cent.

Emphasis on Politics

The general pattern of the agency files showed that politics, economics and foreign relations accounted for nearly three-fourths of the total. Newspapers used foreign news subjects in about the same relative proportion. There was, however, a marked difference between the English dailies and the Indian-language papers in the space devoted to foreign news. The space in English dailies ran between 15 and 33 per cent of total editorial space. Of this, 50 to 70 per cent went to news of the West. The Indian-language papers devoted five to 20 per cent of their space to foreign news, of which news from the West generally formed one half.

A significant fact was the fairly large amount of space given by the Indian press to the United Nations and other international organizations.

It was dangerous to generalize on the performance of the Indian press in its treatment of foreign news, but some assertions might be hazarded. By and large, the Indian showed a lively and continuous interest in foreign news to a degree not noticeable in the popular press of the West. This was an extension into the foreign field of the Indian's traditional preoccupation with internal politics. In pre-Independence days, this had necessarily meant a lively interest in British politics and the consequent domination of news columns by foreign news from Britain or British areas of influence. The position had changed and, while news from the United Kingdom was still important, there was nowadays a better balance in the treatment of foreign news, with the United States and South East Asia coming more into the picture.

Lack of Proportion

The chief complaint made by Indian editors was against the lack of proportion in the news they were receiving from abroad. Most editors interviewed believed that the percentage of space devoted to Western news was very much on the high side and that this was due to the emphasis on Western news in the agencies' news files. One editor said that he thought that Indian papers would devote less space to foreign news if the collection of internal news were more efficient. Almost every editor wanted more news about countries in the East, especially those neighboring India, and were severely critical of the news agencies' failure to furnish more news about Burma, China, Indonesia, Malaya and Tibet.

Some editors thought that the present pattern of the kinds of news put out by the agencies was understandable, but others thought that the coverage of social, cultural, scientific, technical and educational news could be usefully increased. The Indian-language papers also showed a marked preference for human interest stories, of which they received very few from the major agencies.

Apart from the editor of a leading daily, who preferred the agencies to confine themselves to the regular flow of news, most other editors wanted background stories and interpretive material from the agencies not only for publication but also to assist understanding of spot news and editorial comment. A frequently cited case of insufficient interpretation was the military coup in Egypt led by General Nguib.

A frequent criticism of the news agencies was their neglect of the "Indian angle" on foreign news. The failure of foreign agencies to see news from the Indian viewpoint meant that many interesting stories were missed. It was suggested that agency correspondents should be trained to look at news from this point of view. Several editors demanded that the Indian news agencies should station their own correspondents in the principal centers of the news world.

In handling foreign news on the desk, the English dailies naturally did a better job than the Indian-language papers, which suffered from lack of reference books, inadequate libraries, shortage of staff and small resources. A few Indian papers had on their staffs men with some experience abroad, but most papers would welcome facilities for foreign travel for journalists. Several Indian editors said that any move by the Institute to obtain special concessions for foreign travel by journalists would be of immense value.

Discussion from the Floor

Mr. Lowry, in asking the Assembly to discuss the trends revealed in the three reports, said that he realized that a good many things had been thrown at members by the reports, but he thought that some of those present might have been waiting for an opportunity to speak after dealing with the questionnaires and other material sent to them about the survey.

PROF. H. TINGSTEN (*Dagens Nyheter*, Stockholm) thought it very regrettable that the three reports had not been made available to members earlier, as several days were required for a proper study of them. He also thought that, on research problems of such great magnitude, more time was required for discussion than was available at the session.

He then offered specific criticism of the way the surveys had been carried out. The four weeks period given to detailed examination of newspapers was a dangerously short period. A larger period could have been taken if the study had been in less detail, and some of the detail given was unnecessary. He also raised a question about the kind of newspapers examined, since, if it was said that a newspaper carried only two per cent of foreign news, it might be that it was a local paper which was intended to give only local news. The size of a newspaper was also important when giving the percentage of its space devoted to foreign news. For example, Swedish newspapers gave more space to sports than to foreign problems. That was not because Swedish newspapermen

thought sport more important than foreign problems, but because sport needed reporting in greater detail.

To ask people questions such as "Are you satisfied with something?" or "Is this good or bad?" was, in his opinion, of little value. The important thing was to compare newspapers of different types, countries and qualities to show how great was the difference between various newspapers. The surveys had also not stressed sufficiently the fact that it was impossible to obtain background of the type suggested from countries which were not of immediate importance in the world's political situation.

For instance, it was a practice in the Swedish press to send a correspondent occasionally to South America or India or Pakistan or Japan. He wrote a series of background articles over a period of perhaps three months and then his newspaper had no more reports of that sort for maybe two years. On the other hand, on problems about NATO, the United Nations and the European Army, newspapers had to have a little background all the time.

Methods of the Survey

Mr. Lowry replied that by his criticisms Prof. Tingsten had made a valuable contribution to the flow of the news survey. Although texts of the reports had not been issued to members, the speakers in the panel discussions on the flow of the news on the following day had been supplied with advance copies of the reports. It had not been anticipated that discussion of the problems raised by the reports would be exhausted that afternoon, and there were two more sessions entirely devoted to the same field.

Turning to Prof. Tingsten's criticisms of the survey itself, he pointed out that the four-week period of the survey had consisted of a week in each of the months of October, November, December and January. This had been done to cover a wider period of the news flow than would have been possible in four consecutive weeks. The reason the survey had been confined to this period was the magnitude of the daily measurement of 178 newspapers and 45 wire services' reports. Further, all phases of the project had not been confined to this four-week period, which had been selected only for the purely quantitative measurement and analysis. Other reports would deal with longer periods.

Mr. Lowry accepted the validity of the criticism that newspapers varied in character between local and national papers, but pointed out that this

distinction would be made in the final reports. The object of the present interim reports had been to avoid too much detail.

As for the question of how good a job was being done on the flow of foreign news, Prof. Tingsten was mistaken in thinking that questions had been asked only in the large way he described. A detailed qualitative analysis was being carried out by correspondents and editors, but this was separate from the quantitative analysis of the interim reports.

He agreed that background on every little story was impossible, but the problem, as American editors had indicated, was rather one of looking at the entire agency report from the angle of whether it was giving enough interpretation and background.

MR. MARKEL said that he would like to make two things clear about the preparation of the program. First, the discussion of the following day was related to the present discussion, at which only the larger aspects of the flow of news survey were being reported. There would be a further opportunity for discussion on the following day. Second, all members would have the opportunity to study the final report when it was published and offer their comments on it. That was the reason why it had not been considered important to give the interim reports to members beforehand.

Prof. Tingsten asked again what was the reason why members had not received the papers beforehand.

Question of Implementation

Mr. Markel said that one reason was that they were not ready, but the real reason was that they were not intended to be final reports but merely interim reports. If the meeting asked that in the future all papers to be read should be supplied in advance, this would be done.

Prof. Tingsten said he thought that papers treating a number of special problems were much better read before they were discussed.

Mr. Markel replied that the intention at the present session had not been to discuss these reports as reports, but to discuss rather where the Institute should go in implementing them and what should be decided in the way of conferences and seminars to follow them. There would be an opportunity the following day to discuss the larger questions raised. In any case members would have ample opportunity to pass judgment when they received the full report.

Prof. Tingsten said that he wished to talk about the project, which would not be discussed the following day. Members were told they would have

an opportunity to give their observations on the project when it was finished, but the program said that editors would be invited to give their views of the problems of trends revealed at the present discussion.

After a further exchange between Mr. Markel and Prof. Tingsten, MR. A. P. WADSWORTH (*Manchester Guardian*) said that he agreed with Prof. Tingsten that members were at a considerable loss in discussing the project. It was a pity that some effort had not been made to present a printed interim report to the conference.

After further discussion, Mr. Markel said it had been thought that the interim reports would be useful as a preparation for the following day's program. If all papers were wanted in advance at future meetings a great effort would be made to do this, but he thought that a great deal would be lost in spontaneity as a result.

Mr. Wadsworth replied that he did not mean all papers but only special interim reports on projects of this type.

Mr. Markel then said that, in the future, advance texts would be provided in this special case.

Critic of Statistics

MR. C.S. OFTEDAL (*Stavanger Aftenblad*) also expressed doubts about a statistical approach to the news. He thought that if specific major events had been taken and their reflection in various newspapers round the world studied, more useful results would have emerged than measuring general news, when countries might be involved in which nothing worth reporting was happening. He also noted that the role of radio news had been omitted and he thought that such news was important. More and more good newspapers were giving background information and commentary. He asked whether account had been taken in the surveys of leading articles and special articles of comment written by foreign editors.

Mr. Lowry replied that such articles had been measured in each of the areas. He pointed out that one part of the survey had consisted of taking a consecutive month and putting together all the main stories, not on an inch by inch measurement, but in a so-called composite summary of the news from country A going into country B. He had referred to these pictures only by implication. They were very large and the question was how far these pictures could be included in the final reports which, in any case, would be voluminous.

Radio news had been included only in the readership survey because account had to be taken of the fact that people obtained their information

about foreign events not only from newspapers but also from other media.

On the general question of producing an interim report, he said that this had been considered very early in the research, but he and his staff had agreed that it was not feasible to stop in the middle of one of the most important phases of the survey and print an interim report.

MR. TERENCE PRITTIE (*Manchester Guardian*) thought that the question of treatment of the Ramcke speech in the British press had become a little distorted. The objection of German editors that the Ramcke speech had been given more space than Dr. Adenauer's reply was met by the fact that the former speech was both very much longer and very much more important. The British press, it was also alleged, had not emphasized that the organizers of the Ramcke meeting tried to stop the neo-Nazi during his speech. He did not think they had tried very hard because they could have pulled him down by his coat-tails. It was also objected that British papers taking a great interest in the neo-Nazis in Germany neglected the danger of Communism. If the Communists had polled 6 per cent in any Land election, it would have been very remarkable. The neo-Nazis had polled 11 per cent at their first attempt. He would suggest that British press distortion had not been as bad as was made out.

Mr. Lowry replied that it was the answers of German editors to a case history of the Ramcke story in the British press which had implied charges of distortion. British editors would be given an opportunity to make similar comments about the play of British stories in German papers. He invited any German editor present to reply to Mr. Prittie.

Attitude of Editor

MR. ERIK REGER (*Der Tagesspiegel*, Berlin) said that the point made him think of a very difficult problem, which was that the Institute surveys on the flow of news must be combined with a survey of the general attitude of editors to foreign affairs. The flow of news had to be handled by editors and could not be handled well if those editors did not know much about events in other countries. He thought that this survey should be combined with other schemes in the Institute program, such as exchanges of journalists. The flow of news taken by itself did not mean much. The problem was how the flow was handled by the editors.

MR. ERIK BENGTTSSON (*Karlshamn Allehanda*) said that he thought the effect of Mr. Reger's suggestion was that the Institute should become a school for the education of editors. He himself was impressed with the

work done on the surveys. He did not agree with the suggestion of Mr. Oftedal that if something was not happening in a country, editors should not write about it. He thought that one of the most important things the IPI could do was to urge the press to present what was happening all over the world in an understandable way so that people would get to know more about each other.

Classification Problems

Mr. Oftedal raised the question of treatment in the surveys of foreign debates in parliamentary bodies. Were reports of such debates in the press of the country where they took place classified as foreign affairs or not?

Mr. Lowry replied that the question of how best to code and separate all foreign news was very controversial and would still be so after the final report had been made. News from a House of Commons debate on foreign affairs would be measured in the press in every country other than the United Kingdom in this project, and so on. Nevertheless, it was a very delicate point and had raised many pointed discussions among the survey staff. For example, when General Eisenhower spoke to the American Society of Newspaper Editors recently in Washington and made an important policy pronouncement, should it have been measured, if it occurred in American newspapers in a week under examination, on Mr. Oftedal's argument?

MR. MARKEL said that he had raised this question with Mr. Lowry some time before. He had come to the conclusion that a distinction must be made between dateline news and foreign news originating inside a country, because the survey was measuring essentially the flow of news from one country to another.

Mr. Oftedal replied that he did not think that this led to a fair picture. In small countries the speeches by the foreign minister and foreign affairs discussions in parliament made a great impression. What happened about news of the United Nations?

Mr. Lowry replied that news originating from the United Nations and other international organizations was classified as international news, as it did not reflect the policy of only one country. The survey had therefore included all news coming from headquarters such as those of the United Nations in New York, NATO in Paris and the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. It was counted as foreign news even if it flowed only from UN headquarters in New York to, say, *The New York Times*.

HOW GOOD IS THE FLOW OF THE NEWS AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE IT?

MORNING SESSION—THURSDAY, MAY 14

Panel Discussion

Chairman: ERWIN D. CANHAM, Editor, *The Christian Science Monitor*

Speakers: J. M. LUCKER, Editor, *De Volkskrant*, Amsterdam
ROGER MASSIP, Foreign Editor, *Le Figaro*, Paris
JOSEPH NEWMAN, London Correspondent,
The New York Herald Tribune
TERENCE PRITTIE, Bonn Correspondent,
Manchester Guardian

MR. CANHAM said that the panel's discussion of the two basic questions presented by the Institute's flow of the news survey—how good is the flow of the news? and what can be done to improve it?—would deal with the research project but was also directed at a deeper examination of the substantive situation of the flow of the news in the world.

Opening the discussion, MR. LUCKER compared investigation of the flow of news with the task carried out in his own country by hydraulic engineers in solving problems of the flow of Holland's water system. As these engineers would say that the flow of water was excellent and the problem of improving the flow was to control it, channel it to the right places and keep it pure, so the flow of the news was good wherever constitutionally guaranteed freedom of the press ensured that it was unhampered. The Institute was right in spotlighting every case in the world where the fundamental right of the freedom of the press was being attacked. Mr. Lucker appealed to editors to give reports of such infringements more space in their papers.

The tasks facing those who wanted to keep news flowing round the world involved a constant watch for points at which the flow was faulty.

These tasks were being fulfilled by the Institute's flow of the news surveys, but such surveys were costly and could not be repeated indefinitely. He therefore offered several simple and practical suggestions for improving the flow of the news.

His first suggestion was that editors should find time to examine the foreign news cables spiked each day by their sub-editors, to find out whether the spiking was in accordance with their paper's formula, who were the good and bad correspondents and which agencies were sending a significant quantity of superfluous material. Editors might also advise agencies which erred in this respect. Secondly, a "European A.J. Liebling" (writer on press coverage for *The New Yorker* magazine) was needed, ready with a pointed pen to show editors the "wayward press" of Western Europe.

Provincial Syndicates

One drawback to the flow of news concerned the performance of news agencies cooperatively owned by the newspapers of a country. The danger in a small country like Holland was that the larger newspapers were not anxious to improve the agency too much, because they were only competing against themselves if they made the agency service to the provincial press better. In his own country there had grown up the practice of six or seven provincial newspapers getting together to employ their own team of first-class foreign correspondents and it was an example which might be followed by the national dailies of a group of small countries. An alternative was for papers of different countries to allow each other to reprint exclusive news dispatches.

There were also financial ways of improving the flow of news in "quality" papers. One of the causes of occasional failure in the flow might be that nowadays newspapers were not wealthy enough because taxes on profits, high cable rates and heavy newsprint duties were taking away money that should be spent on gathering international news. In his view, politicians, intellectuals and business men all underrated the importance to their own interests of a good flow of news. He urged that any far-sighted government would allow newspapers to become wealthier and thereby better. Two steps which governments could take in this direction were the abolition of import duties on newsprint and machinery, or even the allowing of a discount on profits tax, and the lowering of cable rates. As an example of the way cable costs were hampering the flow of the news, he pointed out that an exclusive story from the Korean front

might be very good for United Nations morale but the costs were prohibitive. The alternative of using airmail was unsatisfactory.

Reviewing the sort of picture countries were getting of their neighbors, he thought that sometimes it was a very odd picture and that Barnum and Bailey ought to be given an honorary degree for their contribution to modern journalism. It was a strange world where some countries got into the news only when an international aircraft crashed there or a ferry boat carrying children sank. In place of using some of the silly trifles supplied by agencies, editors would be wiser to send a correspondent to a country where a greater number of people seemed happier for a longer time than anywhere else, to find out the reasons. Would newspapers be so much more dull if they occasionally covered more positive news of this nature rather than negative news?

Of the qualifications of foreign correspondents, Mr. Lucker said that they must be the best journalists a country possessed—objective, not too nervous and with a good digestion. The foreign correspondent was probably a better journalist than his editor and certainly a better writer, but likely to be a worse organizer.

As for the amount of foreign news a newspaper ought to carry, he thought that editors today should be ahead of what their readers demanded in the way of foreign news, because those readers might well find out one day that they needed more than they had thought. His personal preference was for newspapers which gave newsletters with interpretation and background interlaced with hard news in the American style.

Too Much Political News

As for the type of news carried by agencies, he said that some journalists felt that the agencies gave too much official political news, were too much concerned with capitals and had a preference for public statements. Technical news from America was haphazard and superficial, and nothing was given about philosophic and religious tendencies in Communist China, or about cultural developments in India. If agencies failed in these respects, the newspaper ought to send experienced observers to cover such news—particularly in Point Four countries. Such background news was often in the possession of agency reporters, and the provision of background and interpretation by the agencies could be extremely useful, at least if it was given separately from the news. If this material came in at the same time as the news, the news could be evaluated better.

In a final reference to the Institute's flow of the news surveys, Mr. Lucker said that these surveys were more important than was implied by their immediate results, since from research of this type new sciences in journalistic technique might arise.

Self-Criticism in U.S.

MR. CANHAM, commenting on Mr. Lucker's suggestion that Europe required its own A.J.Liebling, said that considerable and quite severe self-criticism had already begun in newspaper organizations in the United States. As examples of this tendency, he quoted an organization of about 100 editorial writers, formed six years ago, which met to criticize each other's work; the Associated Press Managing Editors Association, which analyzed periodically the performance of the Associated Press; and the American Press Institute, which conducted seminars to discuss members' newspapers. He thought that this form of internal, private and unpublished criticism was a form of cooperation directly in line with Mr. Lucker's suggestions for more searching analysis of the performance of the European press.

MR. PRITTIE said that his comments would be drawn from his experience as a foreign correspondent, which had been almost wholly confined to Germany. He made three preliminary observations on the contemporary German press. The first was that the great bulk of German newspapers were good examples of a democratic press, striving to print truthful news and as much news as their readers could absorb. Second, most German newspapers were only just financially solvent. The Western Powers had made the mistake of reorganizing the post-war German press on its old regional basis and this had made it almost impossible to work up circulations. Third, financially poor papers could not afford to print as much news as they should and foreign news was usually crammed into two-thirds of one small page.

In these circumstances, it was impossible to pretend that the flow of foreign news in the German press was all that it could be, but it was still surprisingly good. There were special reasons for this. The flow of news within Germany itself was so slow and sporadic that German papers gave a high proportion of their limited space to foreign affairs. They had no inhibitions about using agency copy, unlike some British

newspapers. The influx of 10 million East German refugees had brought into the Federal Republic a large group of people particularly interested in world affairs. German newspapers wrote in a style which did not waste words, and the accuracy of their news reporting often compared favorably with that of the British press.

On the other hand, all this did not mean that in news coverage the German press was nearly as good as the British. It suffered from every sort of disadvantage. One hundred and fifty competitive German newspapers (out of a total of over 900) had in all 15 correspondents in Britain, of whom hardly one was a full-time staffer. These correspondents, compelled by economy to report by airmail, were sending mainly interpretive stories, which arrived late and could not be linked with the news of the day, though such interpretation was the largest part of a foreign correspondent's job and a condition of the reader's interest. The result was that the German reader often had to content himself with bald, bare fact and the explanation might arrive too late for him to be interested in it. With money short, the improvement of plant and premises was bound to take priority over measures to improve foreign news coverage.

The scarcity of foreign correspondents meant that day-to-day foreign news was largely taken from agency reports. Unfortunately, German sub-editors showed the same tendency as British to cut agency material automatically into a pattern of unimposing snippety reports, so that very often lead stories were slashed to two or three paragraphs. Another failing was the lack of coherent consecutive reporting of a story, which might finish abruptly before it was properly understood by the reader.

One mixed blessing for the German press in its attempt to cover British news was the existence of British press officers in a dozen German towns who distributed free news services and cheap feature articles. Though these officers did an excellent job, the result was that German newspapers were largely spoonfed with ideas.

British Reporting of Germany

Mr. Prittie offered several criticisms of British reporting of German news. First, there was still a tendency to color news from Germany. Although an anti-German bias was not surprising, it was time that a studied anti-German complex ceased to exist. He thought that the probable explanation of this complex was rather the attitude of the editorial staff at home than that of the correspondent on the spot. An example of

harsh interpretation of German problems was British reporting of the Saar question. The headline given in one paper to a tolerably dignified German governmental statement had been "Germans Yell for Saar."

Secondly, the British press might be getting too hard-bitten about problems essentially concerned with human beings. Refugees were a drug on the market; displaced persons were dull, and even the average German citizen was largely an unknown quantity. Generally speaking, there were too few "human interest" stories about Germany in the British or American press. This was a pity because the average citizen was the truest common denominator in problems of every kind.

While editors seldom nullified the good work of correspondents, it did happen that sometimes this effect was achieved either by giving a story an "unjustified policy twist," by exaggerated dressing up of a story which had already been presented in a sufficiently lively way, or by mixing agency copy injudiciously with the correspondent's report in order to produce a sensational effect.

News and Views

The hardest problem for a foreign correspondent, he said, was to know how much to write. The correspondent must fill the available space with truthful news, written as effectively and entertainingly as possible, and combine facts with interpretation and background information. Mr. Prittie thought that the famous phrase about keeping news and views separate had often been misinterpreted. Though views should not be dressed up as news, it did not mean that a foreign correspondent should not give his views, which gave both point and direction to what he was writing.

Other qualifications of the effective correspondent were news sense, understanding of the particular paper's requirements, lasting interest in the country of adoption, a sense of abstract right and wrong and a sense of humor. Of these, the last two were probably the most important in Germany. Foreign correspondents had a tendency to consider themselves tough, cynical and smart, but these were poor substitutes for patience, understanding and a realization of personal shortcomings. Probably the greatest enemy of the foreign correspondent was the cynicism which led him to suppose that history was a dreary repetition instead of an evolutionary process.

An example of the danger of cynicism was the reporting of the speech

of ex-General Ramcke, to which reference had been made on the previous afternoon. In his opinion, the reporting of the event itself had not been unduly one-sided, but the Ramcke speech had produced a cynical approach to all German problems for weeks afterwards in the British press.

He offered four suggestions for improving the flow of news between Germany and the outside world. The first was that the amount of news handed out to the German press by the Allied authorities should be reduced. The greatest offender in this field was the American press relations system, whose main objective seemed to be to report to Washington just how much material had been pushed out. Quality, rather than quantity, was the need of the German press. Second, the Federal German Government had a special need to explain its views and motives to an unsympathetic world. At present, while there were good press officers in Germany, few of them worked for the Federal Government. Third, an effective exchange of young journalists between Germany and other countries was needed. Short visits abroad were no substitute for six-month exchanges between the British and German press, which would be invaluable.

Complementary Roles

Finally, editors should revise their attitude to agency copy, since there were occasions on which it was preferable to the story sent by a newspaper's own correspondent. Some British newspapers preferred to print an abstract and incomplete story from their correspondent in Bonn about an event 250 miles from the capital rather than the story from the agency man on the spot. It ought to be obvious that agencies and foreign correspondents had complementary and equally important parts to play in maintaining the flow of news. Correspondents were there to tell the story of a country as a whole and not cover every single event.

M. MASSIP said that he wished to discuss one of the most complicated problems affecting the flow of the news—coverage by news agencies—with some observations from his own experience as foreign editor of a large newspaper.

His main conclusion was that the amount of news circulated by the agencies was excessive, and the usual explanation—that the international situation was so complicated and the centers of news interest so numerous that this volume was normal—could hardly be sustained. Though when

a big story broke agencies necessarily gave intensive coverage to their clients, it was a remarkable fact that, even when things were quiet, such services were almost as voluminous as when big news was breaking. While he thought that 20,000 words a day should be enough, no newspaper was receiving less than 40,000 words a day. It seemed as if news agencies did not think that they were doing their work until they had flooded newspaper offices with an ever-increasing flow of news and commentary.

French Phenomenon

This was a fairly new phenomenon of the post-war press, at any rate in France. He thought that there was an obvious explanation for this situation in his own country. Whereas before the war there was only one large news agency in France, the Agence Havas, today the large foreign agencies were distributing their services alongside the Agence France-Presse, which had succeeded Havas. These foreign agencies, and particularly the American ones, were used to servicing newspapers with a large number of pages which demanded a great volume of copy. They had brought this system into the service of the French press and, in the competition between them, the battle had developed particularly in the direction of quantity. He agreed entirely with the editor quoted on the previous afternoon, who had said that before long the main function of a newspaper would be the same as that of the Dutch dikes—to protect readers against the growing flow of news.

An example was the material sent to newspapers by agencies on the day after Marshal Stalin died. Some agency correspondents, working in unimportant countries which could have only a very remote interest in the event, sent long dispatches explaining that the disappearance of the Soviet Generalissimo was a matter of considerable importance—a point on which editors were not in the slightest doubt. This volume of news had complicated greatly the task on the foreign desk of a newspaper, since the mere work of stemming the flow was an exhausting job in itself. It left too little time for sub-editors to study copy received, cut out unimportant material, retain important stories and present these in a clear and acceptable manner. The newspaper which had its own correspondents scattered round the world was fortunate, since they reduced the volume of news to the essentials and offered it in an intelligible form to the public. In newspapers which relied exclusively on news agencies, the task of the sub-editor on the foreign desk was long, difficult and depressing.

One effect of the volume of material sent to newspapers was a drastic decline in quality. Agency correspondents were not robots who could be asked with impunity to keep up the same quality, however much work they did. Compelled to pass on an enormous mass of information, they did not have the necessary time to trim copy with an eye to its presentation. It was simpler for them to string together whole sentences of a political speech rather than reduce the whole text to a shorter, but more dramatic picture. Yet newspapers were interested in receiving first of all a well-digested and presented account, while the full text could perfectly well wait for several hours.

Another defect of agency coverage was the constant endeavor of agencies to beat their competitors not only in the quantity of matter sent but in the speed with which it reached the client. Newspapers themselves were becoming increasingly demanding in this respect and must share the responsibility for the frantic pace of the circulation of news today. Nevertheless, when the "flash" system, invented to carry news of priority importance in short precise sentences, was used for commentaries and explanations which demanded calm reflection, it led to deplorable results.

Dangers of Exclusives

Agencies constantly tried to beat their competitors with exclusive news, and since exclusives were rare, they sometimes had to be invented. The preoccupation with exclusive news led to distortion of facts and sensationalism, creating a dubious kind of rivalry between the agencies. Some agencies refused to admit defeat and if they were beaten on one point of the story, they sought immediate revenge at the next point, with regrettable consequences.

If agencies wanted to improve the flow of news, they should seek better presentation of the news by a reasonable reduction in the volume transmitted and a continual effort to make the stories they sent more understandable.

He did not think that more interpretation was desirable. Mr. Markel had given a definition of interpretation which he did not find personally satisfactory. To interpret a piece of news was there and then to formulate an opinion and utter a subjective judgment. An agency's job was not to interpret the news, but to report and explain it. The news which it transmitted to newspapers was primary matter which it was for the newspapers to handle according to their own political line. Agency news must

be simply presented as the record of a fact, accompanied by explanation when such explanation was necessary. In this respect the agency position was satisfactory. The only criticisms which agencies seemed to merit concerned their presentation of news under the dual aspects of quantity and quality.

MR. NEWMAN referred to the statement, in the survey report the previous afternoon, that the average American newspaper reader consumed only a very few inches of foreign news every day. This raised the question whether there was much sense in increasing the flow if it merely meant that a greater and improved amount of news was going down the drain.

He was sure that many of those present agreed with the quotation on the previous day from a Swedish editor that better newspapers were getting better and worse ones worse. What was far more serious was that, as the bad papers became worse, their circulation became better, while the circulation of good newspapers was in inverse ratio. Applying these truths to the British press, he thought that on the whole the flow of foreign news in good papers was fairly good and not much could be done on the bad papers so long as special rewards were attached to increased coverage of sex, cheesecake and crime.

Bias in British Press

He proposed therefore to limit his comments to the coverage of American news in the good London morning newspapers. Although it was good, there was often a bias creeping in. This had been seen recently in coverage of the United States elections, when most British correspondents, captivated by one of the candidates, had failed to realize that the eventual winner stood a very good chance of being elected.

British coverage of Europe was adequate but here again overemphasis and bias occurred. Coverage of Asia and Korea was rather poor and sketchy. As for news from behind the Iron Curtain, he was amazed at the small interest shown by editors in trying to obtain such information as was available. A good deal was written about Communist China and Russia, but it consisted mainly of expressions of opinion from people outside both areas. Very little time and space were devoted to analyzing material published in these two tremendous areas, so that the outside world had a very limited understanding of what was being read there.

Interpretation of the news was a very important element in improving coverage and attracting people to read more foreign news, which was the basic problem confronting correspondents, editors and publishers alike. So far American newspapers had carried a relatively small portion of interpreted news and the record of readership was not very flattering. He thought, therefore, that the "Markel school of thought" on interpretation might be given a chance to see whether it could not do better than the system which had strongly resisted the idea of permitting newspapermen to inject much interpretation into their reports.

He would go farther and claim for the correspondent a certain right to editorialize in his columns. This would be a shocking idea to some editors, but many correspondents who had been in a country for a period of time were in as good—if not better—a position as their editors thousands of miles away to comment on situations in their area. There would always be sharp dispute on where the dividing line came between justified comment or background and editorializing. He did not think that they could ever be satisfactorily separated, but it was not, in his opinion, a very important issue. Provided a correspondent was objective in his comments and used comment only for the orientation of the reader, without trying to carry a torch for anyone on either side in a dispute, his comment should be acceptable to his editor.

As an example, he pointed out that several correspondents, who reported a recent foreign affairs speech by Sir Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, had described it as one of the most important speeches of Sir Winston's career. On analysis such comment seemed editorializing, but it was justified in its use by a correspondent who understood what the repercussions and significance of the Churchill speech would be in the rest of the world.

Access to Downing Street

One difficulty in improving correspondents' coverage in London was the problem of access to important sources of information. It was unfortunately true that 10 Downing Street today was perhaps as closed to the foreign press as was the Kremlin. Maybe it was even more closed, because one at least could get a letter into the Kremlin and, if it was worded properly, it might get an answer, but he was not so sure if that was the case with 10 Downing Street today. One American correspondent had suggested that, as long as the difficulty of access existed in London, the same treatment should be meted out to British correspondents in

Washington. He did not support this approach, because he felt that the foreign correspondents might still persuade the Prime Minister that there were other ways of solving the problem.

Discussion from the Floor

MR. S. J. GOLDSMITH (London Correspondent, *Haboker*, Tel Aviv) said that he refused to take Mr. Newman's pessimistic view of the comparative circulations of good and bad papers, because the influence of a good newspaper could not be measured in terms of actual circulation. He thought that the aim in foreign correspondence should be to produce the kind of foreign correspondent who could be entertaining and informative at the same time, in the manner of Alistair Cooke, of the *Manchester Guardian*. It was not the work of a newspaper to educate readers, who could go to books for pure information.

MR. MARKEL (Sunday Editor, *The New York Times*) said that, to avoid any misunderstanding, he ought to point out that he fully accepted the definition of interpretation as "facts plus explanation and decidedly not opinion."

He raised two objections to Mr. Lucker's view that news should be separate from interpretation. The first was that the reader reading the news on the leading news page got his first impression of the facts there and was likely to stop there because he did not understand. More important was the demonstration in the Institute's survey that approximately 70 to 75 per cent of the material supplied to newspapers came from the news agencies. He asked how agencies were to supply the kind of interpretation or explanation that Mr. Lucker and Mr. Newman had spoken of. Were they advocating that the news agencies supply a) a factual story and b) an interpretative story?

Mr. Lucker explained that he had not used the term "separation" in the sense understood by Mr. Markel. What he had meant was that he often received from the agencies, months behind the news, feature stories which he would have found useful if they had been cabled the same day or the day after the news broke. These feature stories were often knowledgeable and useful and should be handled with greater care and speed. As for the difference between news and interpretation, he had not meant that the appearance of a story on the front page of a newspaper was dependent on delivery from the teleprinter and was not the responsibility of the news editor concerned. What he was suggesting was that a straight

news story could be used in the morning and the interpretive story from the correspondent left over to the afternoon.

DR. R. HEINEN (*Kölnische Rundschau*) took the view that Mr. Prittie's comments on the German press were correct up to a point but did not entirely correspond with the facts. The regional press had actually been brought into existence by the regulations of the Allied Military Government, which were so severe that at the outset they had prevented his own newspaper from selling in a province only 300 meters from his office, because administratively the other district came under Düsseldorf. A further difficulty facing German publishers was that taxation was so heavy that so far it had been possible only in rare cases to publish really large and important newspapers. They required revenue from other sources to make their production possible. He disagreed with Mr. Prittie's comment that no German newspaper was receiving regular, up-to-date reports from foreign correspondents. This was not true of the *Bonner Rundschau* and the *Kölnische Rundschau*. He did not think that there was anything wrong with the topicality of the German press.

As for the British press officers mentioned by Mr. Prittie, he had never seen any result of their work and he gathered from them that they were in Germany to help foreign correspondents working there. He insisted that they had had no influence on German publishers. Military government regulations had only once interfered with his newspaper, otherwise he had been left completely free to publish what he wanted.

Mr. Prittie thanked Dr. Heinen for filling in the gaps in his account of the German press which time had forced him to leave. British press officers, however, were obviously not in Germany to serve the British press, as Dr. Heinen said. Their primary purpose must be to serve the German press and they did in fact produce six different services which German newspapers could obtain free.

Presidential Election

MR. CHARLES EADE (*Sunday Dispatch*, London) challenged Mr. Newman's criticism of British correspondents' coverage of the United States presidential campaign. It was true that they had been impressed by the personality of Mr. Stevenson but, on the whole, they had not tipped him to win. The general impression given by the British press was that it was an extremely open election and some correspondents had in fact tipped Mr. Eisenhower to win. What was not forecast in England was

a landslide victory for Mr. Eisenhower, but he asked Mr. Newman if it was not a fact that the great majority of American political correspondents had also failed to predict the Eisenhower landslide.

Mr. Newman said that he did not agree with Mr. Eade on the coverage by British correspondents. He had not been able to follow the coverage by American correspondents very closely, but he was inclined to think that Mr. Eade was wrong on this point also.

MR. MARCEL STIJNS (*Het Laatste Nieuws*, Brussels) said that newspapers today needed not only information but also fair interpretation—a task which involved a great sense of responsibility on the part of journalists. The effort must constantly be made to avoid friction between friendly countries. Unfortunate incidents had recently occurred for which newspapers and agencies bore responsibility and which had been detrimental to the good name of the profession. Pointing to a protest in the House of Commons over a scurrilous article about the British royal family in a Belgian newspaper, he said it was wrong that Belgian newspapers should be blamed for an isolated attack in an obscure sheet. Similarly, the reputation of the British press had suffered in Belgium because of articles about the Belgian royal family appearing in some sensational newspapers. When a sensational rumor was circulating in periods of tension, it was essential that the principal news agencies should stick to reporting the facts. Otherwise newspapers would create friction between friendly nations and also do damage to the confidence readers reposed in them. The assistance of public opinion was essential to the defense of freedom of the press, and the confidence of the public should be retained by giving the real facts and interpreting the real situation.

Defense of Churchill

MR. W. L. ANDREWS (*The Yorkshire Post*, Leeds) said that he did not think that Mr. Newman was serious in comparing the methods of Downing Street, under Sir Winston Churchill, to the methods of the Kremlin. The British Premier was not guilty of unfriendly indifference to either the foreign or the British press, but he did not believe it was a good thing for the government and press to be hand in glove. Sir Winston was a democrat, believing in free criticism, and did not approve the practice of politicians giving information to newspapers in return for editorial support. Mr. Andrews urged members of the foreign and British press to try to obtain Sir Winston's opinions from him personally on occasions

of extreme importance. Journalists might not always succeed in this, because Sir Winston believed that Parliament was the proper source of information for the British people. When Parliament was not sitting, there were other methods of getting to know what the British Government thought and the world had not been left in any doubt where Britain stood today on the great foreign issues.

Point Misunderstood

Mr. Newman said that he agreed with every point of Mr. Andrews' tribute to the British Prime Minister. He thought that Mr. Andrews had completely misunderstood the point he made about access to 10 Downing Street. He had not likened the methods of Downing Street to those of the Kremlin. He had said that 10 Downing Street today had become as closed to the foreign press as the Kremlin, and he suggested that Mr. Andrews inquire how many foreign correspondents had been admitted there since Sir Winston's return to power. This inaccessibility had not always existed. It was to be regretted that Sir Winston could not be as accessible in London as he was when he visited the United States.

MR. CANHAM intervened to point out how easily a statement like that of Mr. Newman could be simplified into a misleading comparison between Downing Street and the Kremlin. It was an illustration of the problems of foreign coverage and a specific illustration of the need for adequate interpretation of the context to avoid a misleading oversimplification of a statement made in good faith and with careful reasoning behind it.

MR. JORGENSEN (London correspondent of a group of Danish newspapers) supported Mr. Newman, saying that it had been much easier to obtain information when the former Labor administration was in office. The British Government's tendency to keep information behind closed doors did not apply only to Downing Street. He had found it almost impossible to get a lead from the Ministry of Food on the government's intentions about food imports. Mr. Jorgensen urged that any attempt to exclude the press from access to information about NATO or from attendance at the proposed Bermuda Conference should also be resisted. The Institute should use its influence to see that as many channels of information as possible were available, since this would not only increase the flow of news but also improve its quality.

DR. A. E. YALMAN (*Vatan*, Istanbul) said insufficient news was circu-

lated about constructive developments in the world. He gave as examples original and startling social experiments in India which he had seen on a visit there. When he came back and talked about what he had seen, people listened eagerly. It was news for them, but for newspapers such things were not news. There was similar neglect of critical changes taking place in the economic situation of Turkey. In the Institute's effort to improve the practices of journalism, this idea of the nature of news should be emphasized.

MR. BOLESŁAW WIERZBIANSKI (Free European Press Service, London), commenting on the covering of news from behind the Iron Curtain, said that while the IPI Survey, "The News from Russia," was a very good report on the Soviet Union, it had not paid sufficient attention to the other countries behind the Iron Curtain. News from that area required the same kind of special interpretation, involving knowledge which ordinary newspapers did not possess. That was why news agencies, when reporting news from behind the Iron Curtain, should be allowed to add background material to the straight news.

Inconsistent Flow

MR. V. K. NARASIMHAN (*The Hindu*, Madras) said that although newspapers were receiving a flood of news, the flood was not consistent or a fair and balanced flow from different countries. Attention given to backward areas was very small and this was bound to have a psychological effect on the agencies as producers of news. He felt that something ought to be done about this disproportion, since inevitably it led to distortion. Many Indian editors felt that India was not being properly reported in many parts of the world. Editors at the Assembly could say whether they were getting sufficient news of India and whether the reason why they did not publish news about the country was that the news agencies were not supplying it. The final word lay with the editor, whose responsibility was to see that the flood of news did not become a distorted flood from certain areas and a mere trickle, or nothing, from other areas.

HOW GOOD IS THE FLOW OF THE NEWS AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE IT?

AFTERNOON SESSION—THURSDAY, MAY 14

Panel Discussion

Chairman: URS SCHWARZ, Foreign Editor, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

Speakers: WALTON COLE, Editor, Reuters
ALAN GOULD, Executive Editor, The Associated Press
ROBERT MENGIN, Directeur, Agence France-Presse, London
GEORGE H. PIPAL, General European Manager,
The United Press, London
J. KINGSBURY SMITH, European General Manager,
International News Service, Paris

DR. SCHWARZ said that three points, among others, had been made clear by the presentation of the previous afternoon's reports on the Institute's flow of the news survey. The first was the leading role of the wire services for most newspapers. The second was the great help the Institute had received from the agencies in examining the flow of the news. And the third was the fact that there could never be a split between the Institute and the agencies, since only by friendly cooperation between them could the two fulfil their tasks. He was sure the agency speakers would want to answer two specific questions among those that had already been raised—first, what they thought of interpretation by agencies, and second, why so many editors cut out all but the leading paragraphs of agency dispatches.

MR. COLE said that he and his four agency colleagues represented organizations spending well over £15 million a year on news gathering and distribution, and it was the duty of all present to ensure that this expenditure gave maximum value to editor and reader.

For agency men there was not so much a problem of the flow of the news as dealing with the flood of the news. Some of the conclusions given in the interim survey reports had been too generalized, and as a working newspaperman who believed in the conception of the Institute, he thought that the entire project could be endangered through too much attention to statistics and too little to the facts of life. There had been no mention of the "three horrible C's" of the craft—censorship, costs and communications, but most of the criticisms of agency copy by editors cited in the reports could have been immediately answered under one or other of these headings.

For example, an editor in South East Asia who asked why there had not been any interpretive comment from Egypt during the crisis of October 1952 was apparently oblivious of the strict censorship operating in Cairo. It must be recognized that there were countries that did not want to be adequately covered.

Prohibitive Cable Costs

Some governments also countenanced prohibitive cable tariffs which effectively kept them in the twilight. This had a definite bearing on the statement that news agency files studied in one territory showed that only 30—35 per cent of coverage dealt with the world outside the West. Since normal newsgathering facilities did not exist in approximately half the world, such percentages were understandable.

In his experience it was true that most countries complained of not being fully reported in the press of other countries. Most of this criticism would undoubtedly be removed if daily and evening newspapers everywhere were modelled upon the *Sunday New York Times* or the *London Economist*. He wished to congratulate Mr. Markel on his being awarded the Pulitzer prize for the *Sunday New York Times* "News of the Week in Review," which had been developed to clarify, explain and interpret the week's events. In his opinion, however, purely situational material, which one heard was often lacking, was not a primary responsibility of the agencies. Supplementary information was very important to the agency file, but the primary demand upon a news agency must be for factual news coverage.

Everybody had his definition of what constituted news and he thought that recent developments compelled some amendment of these definitions. In short, it seemed to him that editors today wanted authoritative background explanations.

He would be disappointed if one result of the Institute's survey was not to demonstrate that the flood of the news had in some cases overwhelmed the old established editorial machinery for handling news in many newspapers. Reuters overseas services from London were a typical illustration of news agency developments in recent years. In the early 'thirties Reuters and the other agencies were strait-jacketed by the prohibitive costs of cabling and communications, which prevented any intensive attempt to supplement the concentrated cable coverage or cater to regional requirements. In these circumstances, the newspaper's task was a simple and straightforward one of handling 2,000 to 4,000 words of cables every 24 hours. Then came the impact of modern mass communications on news distribution, with the result that the volume of Reuters world news had multiplied to a routine of 15,000 to 20,000 words a day.

Another way of illustrating the growth in agency services was to look at the figures for press traffic. In 1935 wordage handled by one communications company totalled 25 million; in 1945, it handled 157 million, in 1951, 311 million and in 1952, 326 million words.

Agencies and Editors

For too long agency services had been taken for granted and he was sure that agency men were grateful to the Institute for changing this and for conceding in its investigations that the agencies were making progress and doing a fairly competent job. Reuters wanted to improve their services but needed the realistic support of editors to do so. If editors wanted news from the new centers that were springing up, and proved their keenness by publishing such news, there was no doubt that the agencies could meet their requirements. There was nothing more disheartening to a news agency than to make special efforts to obtain material from a territory and then find that those who had asked for it did not use it at all. One frequently discovered a short circuit between the editorial chair and the desk. If every editor occasionally examined the spikes and wastepaper basket in his news room, he would find himself in the salvage business on a very big scale. He was reminded of this through checking on a series of stories reported as being absent from news agency files; he had found that in almost every case cover had been supplied to the area concerned.

He would ignore the generalizations in the interim reports, but that did not mean he accepted them. Nevertheless, he could not refrain from

hailing the editor who complained that agencies carried lengthy reports of routine political speeches that contained nothing new. Many of the suggestions for the improvement of agency foreign news coverage were constructive and would be of help to the agencies, but most of them underlined the policy that news agencies were striving to follow already. If responsible editors made common cause in expressing their requirements and recognized the existence of censorship, costs and communications, they would find the agencies fully responsive in assisting them to serve to the maximum effect the readership of the world press.

MR. GOULD said that he had intended discussing the flood of news in relation to the flow of news, but he thought that it had already been reasonably well established that the two problems were closely inter-related. He would only add that he sympathized with editors' problems in handling the deluge of copy reaching them from all over the world. Nevertheless, editors could have no conception of the true proportions of that deluge unless they could see news service operations at first hand.

There had never been a time when the task of gathering or organizing or explaining and distributing the news, distilling it from the world's vast outpourings, presented so much complication for the agencies. One of the great journalistic tasks today was that of selecting news information or potential news information. This task of selection had never before presented so many problems, challenging the judgment and integrity of the men handling the news in all parts of the world. The basic problem was to present the news in a way that made it, within reasonable bounds, understandable to the ordinary reader and not simply to the editor or the specially equipped individual.

Physical Problems

This whole operation was complicated by physical problems as well as by problems of judgment and news selection. Censorship and communications presented agencies at every turn with great difficulties in delivering a balanced digest of the world's news. By censorship he did not mean only open censorship, where one knew what had or had not been cleared, but also the unseen censorship which in many countries was a much more complicated problem. He believed that by exchange of

experience, by collective action and by concentration on these problems through organizations like the Institute, the chance of scrapping these barriers was increased.

In addition to these problems, newspapermen faced a fresh challenge from television. The degree to which television was affecting news coverage remained to be fully assessed, but there was no doubt that it was a new competitor for the citizen's time and interest and for advertising revenue. Nevertheless, he suggested that the United States' experience indicated that editors should recognize television as a challenge and not as a threat. The evidence in the U.S. seemed to be that TV increased the appetite of the newspaper reader for detailed reports of events that had been telecast. This placed an increased demand on news services as well as newspapers—demands for more detailed coverage and a wider range of picture coverage.

Newspapermen should devote increasing time, thought and study to interpretive news writing, or explanatory news writing as it was called in the Associated Press. The terminology was less important than a clear understanding of what was meant and more practical agreement on ways of bringing about the main objective of interpretive news writing—to make the news more easily and readily understood by more people, whatever their language or condition or whatever their opportunities to get the world's news.

Two Basic Practices

Nevertheless, it was important to distinguish between proper interpretation and background and improper editorializing or opinion writing. As far as the Associated Press was concerned, the agency was committed to two things as a fundamental practice. First, in covering spot news, the agency acted on the belief that explanation or interpretation became a part of any given news story requiring it. Though all stories did not justify elaborate explanation, it was important in major news to combine the main ingredients that provide the facts and set them in their perspective, giving them the pertinent background and otherwise making it easier for the reader to understand what the news meant.

Secondly, his agency believed that many news situations throughout the world required specialized attention in the form of a separate explanatory article, a piece of discussion or analysis by a columnist or a special Sunday story or series of stories completely separate from immediate spot news activity. These were articles which, when written by

men with the right background or experience, served a very definite and essential purpose nowadays.

He gave two examples of what he meant by explanatory news writing. The first concerned Malenkov's speech in Moscow shortly after Stalin's death. On the surface it seemed to contain nothing of particular importance, but the fact that Malenkov made no use of the stock anti-American insults, such as "warmongers," "Wall Street capitalists" or "cannibals," was a significant point beneath the surface. Therefore, what Malenkov did not say became as important as what he did say, and this was carefully pointed out in many news dispatches.

His other example was an Associated Press dispatch from Washington reporting Senator McCarthy's deal with Greek ship owners. By saying that the Senator had "by-passed the Eisenhower administration" in obtaining an agreement from the ship owners not to deliver war cargoes to the Chinese Communists, the dispatch emphasized a fact not immediately apparent to the average reader, but one necessary to understanding the particular event.

Need for Specialists

On the other hand, not all background information was readily available and it was in this field that news services generally had found that the assignment of specialists had become increasingly important. A prime example of this field was news from Russia, where he felt that the Institute discussions a year before and its survey of the subject had made an important contribution to understanding the problem. An emphatic point in the survey, whether it was made conclusive or not, was that an agency was much better equipped to handle these special problems if it used the services of a trained newspaperman than if it called in somebody from outside the profession to do a so-called expert's job.

He advised editors to take Mr. Cole's point to heart and to make a more frequent examination of the problems of news agency coverage, so that they might get a better idea of the range and scope of the flood of news copy coming into their offices. He thought that too frequently there was a failure to distinguish between what the news services delivered and what actually appeared in print. Another misconception was that the resources of the news services were inexhaustible and infallible. The agencies laid no claim to infallibility.

He also wished to express his agreement with the speaker of the

previous afternoon who had referred to the difficulty of explaining newspaper matters statistically and who had said that news should not be expected from any given country if on a particular day there were no news developments of international interest. He thought that newspapermen too often deluded themselves by dealing in theories instead of practicalities. On the other hand, agencies should be alive to matters that professionally they might consider "off beat," as contrasted with the spot news, and should be examining in many areas their failure to find news.

M. MENGIN apologized for the unavoidable absence of M. Nègre, Director-General of Agence France-Presse, from the Assembly. As his representative, he would deal briefly with the problems of an agency correspondent abroad and with possible ways of improving the quality of agency services.

He expressed the hope that newspapers which concentrated on spreading the truth and not merely on making profits would attach less importance than they already did to speed. Technical development was such that, while the means of transmission had become extremely swift, the observer's actual perception of a fact or event was no quicker today than it had been in the time of horse carriages and sailing ships. Yet correspondents were constantly asked to describe things they did not have time to see, let alone to grasp and understand. One result of this excessive haste was the extraordinary volume of news circulated by the agencies, of which M. Massip had already spoken.

Reporting Running Stories

He gave as an example House of Commons debates, of which reporters were asked to give an account as they were running and without knowing in advance what really important statement would emerge. In a recent debate it was only towards the end of his speech that Mr. Selwyn Lloyd had made sensational revelations about attacks on British troops in the Canal Zone since the beginning of April. By the time that point was reached, he had already filed to his agency 200 words of Mr. Attlee's speech and 800 words on the first part of Mr. Selwyn Lloyd's speech.

Each agency correspondent was supposed to be first with the news if possible and each received a note every time another agency or news-

paper correspondent beat him with a true or false story on any topic. That was why copy was flowing in such volume. A solution to this problem was that the correspondent or the sub-editor of the agency handling the copy should assume the responsibility of indicating on a story whether, in his opinion, the news was important or not. This might perhaps ease the task of foreign editors of large newspapers.

Agency messages should always carry the signature of the agency, since it was important for the reader to know exactly the source of a piece of news. That would mean giving up the present practice of mixing the signatures of several agencies on a story, a practice which was worse than leaving out attribution altogether.

Need for Explanation

He was happy to find himself in agreement with many of his colleagues present on the interest readers would have in receiving more explanation and less editorializing. Correspondents often wrote about subjects which they hardly understood and which the public did not understand at all, but out of haste or laziness they did not give the background necessary for an understanding of the facts. They quoted names, dates of treaties and geographical areas without bothering to remind the reader who the named person was or what were the terms of the treaty.

It was his uncomfortable belief that newspapers, in spite of or perhaps because of their vastly developed means of conveying the news, were less interesting and less reliable today than ever before. He quoted the opinion of Elie Halévy, the French historian of the English people, that while his principal source of information for the period before 1914 had been the British press, it was impossible for a serious historian after that date to place any reliance on that same press. Some of the reasons for that decline lay with the agencies and with what newspapers demanded of the agencies. He returned to his point that agency correspondents were being asked to write stories about events that they had hardly had time to see, or indeed had not yet seen at all, whereas when the correspondent was in a position to give an exact account of some event that was already past, his dispatch was thrown into the wastepaper basket.

One example of this treatment which had struck him forcibly occurred at the time of the Berlin blockade, when people in London, Paris and New York were asking whether a world conflict would not result. At

that time there was a conference at the Kremlin which brought together for several days the Ambassadors of Britain, France and the United States with the Soviet Minister of Foreign Affairs. The conference took place behind closed doors and journalists could only write of the coming and going of the Western ambassadors. Though all that the reporters were able to see was whether the ambassadors were smiling or looking preoccupied as they walked out of the Kremlin, they were asked to write long articles on the conference—articles which unfortunately were published.

Lost Opportunity

After the Moscow conference the time came when the Western governments felt that they could publish the minutes of the meetings between their ambassadors and the Soviet minister. At last the public was in a position to learn the truth of what had gone on and to draw lessons from it for the future. Yet one could count on one's fingers the number of newspapers which published this document. Editors thought that the conference no longer interested their readers. They saw as their task the enlightenment of the public not on what had happened a few days before, but what would happen the following day. This was the system which ended in the public's never being informed.

He quoted another example in the latest speech by Sir Winston Churchill and asked how many newspapers had had the courage to give the full text of that speech. And yet, he said, the world press had given and would give 50 times the number of lines which the speech itself would have taken, to commentary and reaction about a text which the public would never have the chance to read.

He expressed his confidence that the Institute's Assembly was one of the most useful means of looking at such difficulties, defining objectives and discovering positive means of helping reporters to put the truth at the disposal of the public.

MR. PIPAL said, that for reasons of time, he would confine himself briefly to specific cases and leave generalizations on one side. The answer to the question "How good is the flow of news?" must be relative, but he would say it was incomparably better than it had been 10 or 20 years before, thanks largely to better communications. The problem therefore turned more on the answer to the second question—what

could be done to improve the flow of news—and this was a question of quality.

One key to modern agency practice had been given the day before in the Institute's reports. Though many editors had indicated at the first IPI Assembly in Paris that stories on economic, sociological and cultural developments were ignored by the agencies, the previous afternoon's report had said that only two out of 48 European newspapers had carried a brief agency coverage of a significant story from India. Yet, as long as two newspapers out of 48 printed a story, the agencies would cover it because technical facilities were such nowadays that they could afford to give editors this wide selection.

Agencies were the most sensitive organizations in the world on editors' interests and, whenever they found that any story interested a reasonable number of editors, it became a competitive story which the agencies would cover. This analysis might sound like buck-passing but it was actually an accurate description of the mechanics of agency business. An agency's efforts to improve the quality of its report should not be directed at forcing on a newspaper a fixed daily quota of news from, say, Bombay if the reader was more interested in news from Berlin. An agency's first task was to make sure that its Bombay coverage reflected the importance of and the interest in India, but thereafter its attention should be concentrated on ensuring that its news conformed with the older and permanent goals of accuracy and objectivity.

Tailored Servicing

International agencies had another practice which was important for improvement of the flow of news. Nowadays they could not send one basic report round the world and satisfy every editor with it. They must give newspapers in each area a foreign service approximating to the scope of coverage which an editor would demand if he had his own team of correspondents. Such services required not merely a weeding out of stories by the desk man at every communications relay point but also special attention at the source of the news.

This system of setting up bureaus of correspondents to cover regional news interests had developed to a point at which every major bureau was staffed to report what was most interesting or important to a particular area or even country. This, in his opinion, was the most legitimate and important field for development of the flow of news by agencies today.

As for interpretation of the news, he felt that this question was agreed to be one of definition, and he did not think that a story had ever been written which did not contain interpretation in one sense or another. At the same time an agency must be vigilant as Caesar's wife in keeping opinion out of its reports. Interpretation was, in a sense, the basis of the expanding service which agencies were seeking to provide by the regional coverage system.

As an example, he quoted the Tidelands Bill, passed into law by the American Congress after considerable debate. This bill concerning ownership of offshore mineral rights was given intensive coverage in the American press during the debates, but such coverage would not have interested the foreign press. Nevertheless, when the bill became law, the appropriate correspondent in the agency's foreign department believed that the moment had come when a properly interpreted story would be of interest to editors abroad. His treatment of the story, giving a complete background of the dispute and explaining the possible implications for maritime countries (where anything which might amend or modify the international usage of territorial limits at sea could be of great political importance), was a piece of interpretation without which there would have been no story for foreign readers.

He agreed with Professor Tingsten's remarks on the previous day about every story not warranting interpretation, but there was a particular time when the development of a story ensured a certain news audience and that was the moment when background was required.

MR. SMITH said that he would draw on his own experience as a combined reporter and agency executive to offer suggestions on improving the flow of news. The need for cheaper communication rates could not be stressed too strongly. The high cost of press communication rates, especially to and from isolated danger spots of the world, represented one of the greatest obstacles to an improvement in the free flow of news. One of the main reasons for the lack of fuller coverage from areas like India, Asia, Australia and Latin America was the high cost of communication rates.

Flow into Countries

The problem, however, was not only one of fuller coverage *from* those areas; it was perhaps even more important to improve the flow of news

to them. There were many areas in the Far and Middle East where the lack of truth about the Western world was a danger to peace. The reason for this deprivation was the high cost of transmission rates. The problem was a menace not only to the news agencies and large newspapers but also to the correspondents of little newspapers in small countries. These special correspondents had told him that the prohibitive cost of cables meant that they had to leave spot coverage to the agencies. He also knew from his own recent trips round Europe that even the major agencies had ordered some of their correspondents to curtail the flow of news because of the high cost of communication. It was the reader who suffered, because the tendency was to report only spot news and ignore the important job of giving the significance and implications of the news.

Spot Bulletins Only

He gave an example from his personal experience in Teheran during the Anglo-Iranian negotiations over the oil dispute. When the British delegation announced that there would be no agreement and they were returning immediately to London, he found that the only cable channel working was that operating direct to New York. The backlog of ordinary press traffic meant an estimated 26 hours delay on messages and only urgent press rate copy was going out immediately at a cost of 75 cents a word. Faced with this heavy rate, he had filed only spot bulletins and left the backgrounding of the news to the cable desk man in New York. Yet that was the moment when the readers' interest in spot interpretation would have been greatest.

Prohibitive transmission costs frequently prevented the exchange of information and viewpoints essential to international understanding. He urged the Assembly to go on record as favoring the establishing of the lowest possible transmission rates for press material. Such rates should be uniform in the same geographical area and not differ greatly from one neighboring country to another. At present a correspondent in London filed copy to New York at two cents a word, but if the same correspondent went to Paris and filed direct from there to New York, it cost him approximately $6\frac{1}{2}$ cents a word.

Another problem of improving the flow of news concerned freedom of movement for correspondents. It was essential that when trouble flared up in world danger spots, responsible correspondents should proceed instantly to the scene. Local correspondents were not always able to

report the facts, often coming under influences which restrained their activities even when there was no actual censorship. Experience had shown that governments hesitated to exercise the same influence on visiting correspondents from the major capitals of the world.

The chief obstacle nowadays was the delay in securing visas. Little could be done about countries behind the Iron Curtain, but he was thinking of nations which were considered part of the free world, especially in the Middle East. As an example of the delay, he quoted the difficulty of getting a Western correspondent from his agency's Rome bureau into Iran during the troubles.

There should be a form of international passport for foreign correspondents, whose names could be submitted to governments for advance clearance through an international organization like IPI. If the government concerned had no objection to a correspondent, it should agree to his accreditation card being valid for one year, subject to renewal, with appropriate safeguards if the correspondent violated the laws of the country after entry. He suggested that the Assembly should recommend the Institute to study the best method of approaching the governments of the free world to secure their acceptance of such a plan in principle.

Discussion from the Floor

MR. MARKEL (Sunday Editor, *The New York Times*) asked the panel to discuss Mr. Lucker's view, expressed at the morning discussion, that facts and interpretation should be handled separately.

M. P.-L. BRET (observer from the Société Générale de Presse, Paris) intervened on the problem of interpretation. He thought that on the question "Where does objectivity end and subjectivity begin?" a journalist's professional conscience should settle the matter. Even where explanation was indispensable, it implied nevertheless an exercise of individual judgment which intervened between news and reader. That was proved by the fact that such an intervention on a right wing newspaper was often the contrary of what it was on a left wing paper. To justify its claim to be international, a news agency must reduce such intervention to a minimum, recording the facts, recalling their antecedents and placing them against the background of the present. An international agency must not evaluate events in its own name. If it did, it was bound to be national.

Answering Mr. Markel, Mr. Gould said that the Associated Press did

two things. It provided interpretation as a part of spot news coverage, in the conviction that the only sensible way to understand what the news meant was to put in the information and background which would give the story perspective and the reader a focus on the meaning of the news. But many stories required more specialized and detailed attention than could be given in the day-to-day rush, and so the agency maintained specialists around the world to dig into the facts and bring out the full significance of a given situation.

Vote for Interpretation

Mr. Pipal said that there was a difference between running the interpretation into the same story and carrying it separately. It depended on the story which practice was followed. A recent survey of 300 American editors by the United Press had brought a vote of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ to one in favor of more interpretation. On the specific point whether interpretation should be kept separate from the facts of a story, slightly over 50 per cent of the American editors had said they wanted it carried separately. This answer had presented a problem because a certain type of interpretation could not be kept apart. Therefore the only guidance in their answers was that, if the interpretation could be written in a few paragraphs, it should be included in the story in such a way that it could easily be cut out. He repeated his view that interpretation in some form was an inherent part of all stories.

Mr. Kingsbury Smith agreed with Mr. Pipal that, if the reader was to get the benefit of the explanation, interpretation could not be kept separate from the news. On an important spot news story the reader was not going to read the spot news and then turn to a later page to read the interpretation.

Mr. Gould said that continuing studies in the United States in the past few years had shown overwhelmingly that editors wanted interpretive or explanatory writing combined with spot news coverage. But views were not unanimous and never would be. Many editors were properly afraid of the capacity of the writer of a story—whether he was an agency or newspaper correspondent—to exercise a judgment between valid interpretation, or explanatory writing, and pure opinion. The problem was to define the area in which appropriate explanatory writing could be carried in the body of the news story. Agencies were trying to define this area with, he thought, some degree of success.

MR. E. BENGTSOON (*Karlshamn Allehanda*) said that, as the representative of a provincial Swedish newspaper, he thought there was a great danger in stressing explanatory news too much. The difference between explanatory news and opinion might (and he thought it had sometimes happened) be so little that the news coming to the smaller newspapers through the agencies would not be as unbiased as it should be. This meant a misrepresentation of the news in a type of newspaper which was often the sole medium of information for readers in small towns. Any agency distributing news all over the world must try to give the facts first, and any explanation added must never be mixed with opinion.

MR. PAUL BLOCK, JR. (*Toledo Blade*, Ohio) asked the panel whether they thought that interpretation could be the same for liberal as for conservative newspapers. He found it was hard to get specific examples of interpretation. The example of the Tidelands Oil Bill given by Mr. Pipal was not interpretation but localization, which was good but not the same as interpretation.

The Real Issue

Mr. Gould said that Mr. Bengtsson and Mr. Block had raised valid points. What was actually being discussed was better news reporting by men better qualified, better equipped and more experienced in their particular field. Since a better job of news reporting was the issue, it was possible to lay too much stress on the explanatory or interpretive label. Agencies had become, without any question, more conscious of the complexity of news and more aware of the need of specialized knowledge to give each story background and make it more understandable. Whatever the label used, all the instances mentioned came under the same general heading of more expert reporting and better balance in news covering. He thought it worth mentioning also, in view of the emphasis laid on sticking to the facts, that a factual story was not always fair, balanced and completely intelligible to the average reader. A story could be distorted or biased by the omission of facts perhaps more readily than by the injection of an interpretive viewpoint.

THE STATE OF THE PRESS

MORNING SESSION—FRIDAY, MAY 15

Panel Discussion

Chairman: ELJAS ERKKO, Editor, *Helsingin Sanomat*, Helsinki

Speakers: DR. HENRY STEELE COMMAGER, Professor of History,
Columbia University, New York
BERTRAND DE JOUVENEL, writer and political scientist
THE HON. SIR HAROLD NICOLSON, K.C.V.O., C.M.G.,
author and critic
DR. WILHELM RÖPKE, Professor of Economics,
Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva

MR. ERKKO said that during the earlier Assembly sessions the question of the influence of the press had cropped up in connection with the flow of news. His view was that newspapers existed primarily to give news and a real flood of news was needed to give the editor a choice. A newspaper which solved the problem of handling the flood was best placed to give satisfaction to readers and thereby to gain respect and influence. Different wars had done considerable damage to the position of the press by robbing it of its independence of action, and it had taken a long time for governments and political parties in many countries to understand that freedom must be restored entirely to the press.

He was convinced that without the influence of the press, the present fight to preserve Western civilization would be hopeless in many countries which were daily bombarded with ideas threatening their destruction. Editors, wherever they were, must see to it that they did not lose the confidence of their readers and thereby their influence. That meant that they had also to take note of sound criticism.

He was also convinced that, in spite of the increasing importance of radio and television, the press would remain the most influential factor in the public life of any nation. Paradoxically, governments which had destroyed the free press in their own countries used newspapers to propagate their ideas when they were in power, and this factor was a measurement of the influence of the press.

The panel who would discuss "The State of the Press" at the present session were distinguished laymen representing the English, French and German-speaking world—brilliant and courageous men who had themselves shown an independent mind and love of freedom.

DR. COMMAGER said that generalization about a vast and complex subject such as the influence of the press was very difficult. Its influence varied greatly, not only from country to country, but within each country from time to time. For example, he thought that the press in the Scandinavian countries was considerably more influential in politics than was the press in the United States. It was probable that the influence of the press in the realm of political ideas and activities was on the decline, in the United States at least, and, he suspected, also in Britain. The role of the American press in the last four or five Presidential elections had indicated that there was no logical connection between editorial opinion and public opinion.

At the same time it was a cardinal error to consider the influence of the press only in terms of editorials or even of news coverage. In fact, that influence was more pervasive, if more intangible, in other fields. In what might be called the area of social habits or the field of standards and values, the press reflected the standards of society and in turn helped to mould them. Its influence could be detected in such things as the space and prominence given to economics, professional sport, sensational stories of vice and crime, and a non-existent thing called "café society"; in the curious fashion of reporting weddings or engagements; in the attention or lack of attention the press gave to books, art and music.

Nature of Influence

These things moulded the ideas of readers imperceptibly. An editorial denouncing comic strips could not be compared in importance with the fact that comics were presented day after day with the newspaper's sanction. Similarly an editorial criticizing moral standards in public life was relatively uninfluential when compared with the presentation of advertising material, of which much appealed to the baser motives of fear or jealousy. Thus the real question was not whether the influence of the press was increasing or decreasing but what was the nature of its influence. Was that influence for good or for evil, socially beneficial or socially demoralizing?

He would say dogmatically that only an institution that was independent could fulfil social obligations, ascertain the nature of standards and values and sustain them. This process of inquiring into social responsibility or moral values required a degree of objectivity and disinterestedness which the press generally did not have. Yet it claimed to be on a par with the other agencies making opinion in basic matters, such as the church, the school and the university. The press claimed, rightly, the same immunity from political interference, on the ground that only a free press could guide the people toward the truth and teach the practices of democratic discussion and judgment essential to free government. But the press differed sharply from church and university in that it was also a business, and the plea of business necessity constantly overrode the dictates of public service or the counsels of social responsibility. As a business, the press depended for its prosperity on two major elements—the reading public and the advertiser. While it did not admit, openly at least, the influence of the advertiser, it rarely denied the predominant influence of the reader and pleaded that a newspaper must give people what they want, otherwise another newspaper would do so.

Exceptional Papers

There were exceptions to this generalization. The most notable were *The Times* (London), *The New York Times*, *Manchester Guardian*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, the *Dagens Nyheter* and the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. Their number was comparatively small, but their influence was great even though their circulation was not commensurate with that of papers of a very different type. He suspected that the disproportion was greater in Britain than in the United States, since the gap between the *Manchester Guardian* and the *News of the World* was greater perhaps than that between the best and worst papers in America.

He thought that the comparison between a newspaper and a university was illuminating because no university would sacrifice its independence for the sake of popularity or financial gain.

Was it too much to ask that newspapers should develop the same standards of independence that were found in major universities? If they did, it meant not only that owners, editors and workers should make the right policy regardless of pressure from the public or advertiser but also that they should create mechanism to assure independence—such as security of tenure for the responsible staff, mechanism for enlisting the

staff in the process of policy-making, protection against all improper pressures from the state, business or even the public, and facilities for developing a high degree of ability and objectivity. This was not an Utopian ideal, for already some newspapers in Western countries had achieved this degree of independence in their standards. It could be done because in journalism Gresham's Law operated in reverse. High standards flourished on their own work and the more newspapers there were that raised the standards of readers, the larger would be the audience demanding and supporting high standards.

Need for United Front

Dr. Commager asked why the better and stronger papers should not present a united front to the public and the advertising community on this matter of standards. Where they had already exercised their great power in the role of advertising, they had not suffered, and there was no reason why they should not carry that insistence on certain standards of decency much further into the field of ethics and eliminate from advertising other more or less subtle appeals to all the baser emotions and cheaper attitudes vulgarizing our society.

An even more extreme development along these lines might be contemplated. Already one great newspaper, *The Christian Science Monitor*, was run by a church and the experiment might be tried of having newspapers controlled by universities and churches. Such an experiment should enlist the support not only of benefactors and foundations but also of the press.

At the moment the press was losing the kind of influence it ought to exercise even though it might be gaining influence of another kind. It was not the force for social good that it should be. It needed to re-examine in the most searching way the whole of its standards and practices. It was possible to bring serious charges against the press and sustain some of them—that the press was flagrantly partisan and class-conscious, that it failed in any serious maintenance of moral standards, that it catered to vulgar curiosity and base instincts rather than to the minds of its readers and that it shared heavy responsibility for debauching public taste. While there were many virtues to balance these charges, he was not concerned with them at this point. The press had tended to accept the role marked out for it by tradition and economic habits and circumstances without inquiring too closely into the validity of that

tradition. In his opinion it had not yet begun to appreciate, much less exhaust, its real influence and power. The press could not regard itself as a social institution unless it was prepared to serve society disinterestedly. It could not argue for high standards in public life unless its own practices measured up to and advanced those standards.

M. DE JOUVENEL said that the phrase "the influence of the press" meant three things. The first was the influence which consisted in making readers "vote for Smith." He was happy to say that this type of influence was, in his opinion, very small. The second kind of influence consisted in presenting to the citizen of the modern world the problems he had to face and furnishing him with the bases of his judgment about them. This influence, which was what Mr. Markel had meant when he spoke about interpretation in his opening address, was very important and salutary. It was not perhaps as considerable as it ought to be.

The third type of influence was very considerable and generally bad. It was the kind of which Dr. Commager had spoken—social influence, the corruptive influence on manners that the press exercised to the extent that it became an amusement industry. The present Assembly, however, was top heavy in that it comprised only representatives of good newspapers, and this was not the place to hand out reproaches.

The Three Strata

M. de Jouvenel likened the history of the press to a geological structure in which three successive strata of journalism were discernible. The primary stratum was the editorial article or leader, which was in essence the fossilized survival of the old type of newspaper, the vehicle used by one journalist or a small group to spread their views. These journalists interpreted facts which were already well known and addressed themselves to a tight homogeneous community which did not need to have the news recorded because it had already been spread by word of mouth. An example of this type of newspaper was the British weekly, the *Spectator*. This type of editorial journalism tended to be lost to sight in the too large modern newspaper. It was hidden inside the newspaper, perhaps on the editorial page, and the journalist who wrote it was addressing himself to a public which nowadays was much more scattered and heterogeneous and did not have the same common fund of experience

or prejudices as in former days. This type of journalist suffered also from the need for brevity, which made it impossible to build up his background of explanation against which to place the commentary.

The second stratum of a newspaper was the news and information part. Here he could not agree that the news could be entirely objective and impartial. The very word "information" implied the organization of primary matter and that meant changing it. The news must be the reflection of an act of mind and the important thing was that it should reflect the act of an honest mind. He had been extremely impressed by Mr. Cole's reference to the flood of 326 million words arriving in news agencies for redistribution to newspapers.

At all points there must be selection of the news, right down to the reader who, with half an hour to read his paper, did not possess the journalist's skill in reading and digesting the whole in a matter of minutes.

He was opposed to the suggestion that countries should be assigned "quotas" for their news. That would lead to a sort of European union of newspapers which would assign to each country a certain number of columns. He did not see the point of that, since it imposed on the reporting of events in different countries a rigidity which would not lead to the real purpose of enlightening the reader on the most important problems.

Comparison with Radio

As for the suggestion that journalism had been threatened by the rise of radio, he said that if that were true it would be an astonishing paradox, since the radio was in essence a throwback to the Middle Ages. Listening compared with reading was uneconomical in any case, since one could read faster than one could listen. Further, a newspaper was a liberal instrument when compared with the radio, which was essentially authoritarian. When one opened a newspaper, one had a choice of news—a choice which was limited but still a choice. But when one listened to the radio, one was compelled to follow the selection of news in the order chosen by the radio's news staff and to receive the news with the slant given by them.

The third stratum of a newspaper was the part devoted to amusement. One was forced to recognize that newspapers were being taken more and more by the great mass of readers as a means of amusement. Therefore, the type of recreation provided by a newspaper was of the utmost importance. If it was vulgar, the recreation it afforded was bad for morals

as well as for the mind, and no amount of good journalism on the editorial page could make up for the damage it did.

He thought that one of the things against which newspapers must strive most intensely was the lowering of standards in the recreational part of the newspaper, since it was impossible to overemphasize such a danger to modern society.

Return of News Letters

He concluded with a reference to two recent developments in the press.

One was the revival of the confidential news letter, which was a return to an older style of journalism, since it consisted of opinions communicated to a small number of readers. This revival, in view of its comparative costliness, was a sign of a certain discontent with what even the best newspapers provided.

Another development which in his opinion had a considerable future was the effort being made to give unity to the whole contents of a newspaper. In his view, the good newspaper was one in which the journalist brought the same attitude of mind to whatever column he was writing—an attitude which sought to entertain the reader as much in the editorial column as in the recreational side of the paper. This, he thought, was the secret of success of the *Manchester Guardian* and of the Sunday edition of *The New York Times*.

DR. RÖPKE said that he would confine his attention to what he called "the high-level press." He would draw his points mainly from the old *Frankfurter Zeitung*, with which he had been connected in earlier days. He thought this approach would be more appropriate in view of the widely accepted principle, *de mortuis nil nisi bonum*.

In his opinion a good newspaper exercised three functions. The first was to give information, pure and simple. The second corresponded with the part played by the market place in the ancient world; that is to say, an agency by which society is made to see itself continuously, so that everyone within it feels that he belongs. When newspapers were prevented from fulfilling this function, as they had been in Nazi Germany, society reacted to the loss of this process of continuous-integration by crumbling away into different groups like watertight compartments. This function of the press was bound up with its task of counterbalancing the tendency of an all too powerful state to become absolute all the time and under all con-

ditions. The role of the press as an intermediary between state and people was what made the air in modern mass democracy breathable.

The third function of the good newspaper was even more important. It was an instrument for shaping public opinion in the special sense of creating an articulated, responsible and intelligent judgment in the process of public discussion. Such a newspaper enjoyed a comparatively small circulation, but the real secret of the contrast between its influence and circulation was that the paper addressed itself to the highest level of readers, to people everywhere in positions of responsibility equipped with a high standard of general culture. In a phrase, such a newspaper was written for "the general staff," in the widest sense of the term. These readers had an influence which reached from the top to the bottom of any social hierarchy.

Ideal Qualities

The production of a "high-level" newspaper required above all a staff of foreign correspondents dedicated to a bigger job than merely collecting the facts. They brought to their interpretation of the news gifts and propensities which might have made them statesmen, diplomats or historians. A second feature of such a newspaper was its integrity, taste, judgment, sense of responsibility and independence. A newspaper required a long life to build up a tradition and code to which the whole staff felt themselves dedicated. A third feature was the excellence of the scientific, artistic and literary staff, and its final notable quality was the large part played in it by expert extra-editorial contributors.

SIR HAROLD NICOLSON said that he did not think that his predecessors in the discussion had raised the essential question of whether the influence of the press was increasing or declining, but first it was necessary to define what was meant by the term "the press." There was in fact no such thing as "the press." There were instead a lot of different papers, some of them what Dr. Röpke had called "high-level." While he felt that the use of that term was wounding to newspapers belonging to the "middle" or "lower" level, it was true that the "high-level" newspapers exercised an immense influence on important people and therefore on events, whereas the other newspapers had very little direct influence and only a certain indirect influence.

Dr. Commager and M. de Jouvenel had agreed that the direct political

influence of the popular newspapers was not very great. Such papers did not affect elections and he did not think that they had much direct or positive influence on thought, but he did agree that they could affect habits very much, for good or bad. This indirect effect on social custom was very great. Its character was negative and destructive rather than positive.

As an example of what he meant, he recalled the attempt made by Lord Northcliffe, through the *Daily Mail*, to induce the British public to wear a certain type of hat just after the First World War. The campaign lasted about a fortnight, but nobody thought of buying the hat.

On the other hand the popular press could draw the attention of the public to minor matters of social interest and he thought that its influence was beneficial and wide on such subjects as litter or the spoiling of woods by pulling up bluebells.

The difficulty about the popular newspapers, to his mind, was not their presentation of the news so much as the way they changed the order of importance. He asked what impression must be left on the mind of the reader of only one popular newspaper, who never saw another newspaper, about what was really happening in the world, because one day something might be regarded by the editor of that paper as very important and given great prominence while the next day it was replaced by something totally different. It was bad for a democracy not to be allowed the opportunity of getting its news in the right order, and he thought that the BBC was an excellent corrective to this tendency.

To the general rule that the popular press exercised no positive influence, Sir Harold made an exception of its power to destroy reputations, but he did not think that happened in Britain. Newspapers and their proprietors with an *idée fixe* about some things could be extremely unfair to causes or institutions, but he had very seldom known a paper to be unfair to an individual. This was largely due to the British libel law, but the general professional atmosphere did not approve of manifest unfairness to individuals.

No Interference with Press

He vigorously opposed the suggestion of any attempt to raise newspapers in Britain to the level of universities. Though the British press had its faults, they could be remedied only by the press itself. He believed that in Britain and in every country there was, as in the medical profession, a very high standard of professional decency in journalism. If this was

violated too flagrantly, the impression seeped through that such violation was one of the things that ought not to be allowed. The golden rule was to avoid interference with the press, since the good press was certainly not losing its influence and the second-rate press never had much.

Discussion from the Floor

MR. CHARLES EADE (*Sunday Dispatch*, London) asked Sir Harold Nicolson two questions. The first, concerning the alleged lack of political influence of the popular press, was whether the London *Daily Mirror* did not have a very great effect on voting at the 1945 general election, particularly on the service vote, which helped to sway the election in favor of the Labor Party. His second question was whether Lord Northcliffe, in producing his *Daily Mail* hat, did so not to persuade people to wear a particular hat but to make them remember the name of the *Daily Mail*. It looked like that in view of the fact that Sir Harold himself had remembered the hat incident, which had occurred 33 years before, and had got the name of the paper right.

Sir Harold Nicolson replied that he had not noticed any effect at all of the *Daily Mirror* in his own constituency in West Leicester in 1945, though he did think that it had a certain effect in the 1951 general election, though opposite to the one intended. The fact remained that the whole weight of the press was on the Right, more or less, whereas the electorate very often went to the Left. As regards the Northcliffe hat, he agreed that Mr. Eade was right.

DR. A. C. JOSEPHUS JITTA (*Haagse Courant*) referred to M. de Jouvenel's comparison between the radio and the newspaper. There were, in his opinion, at least three essential points of difference. The first was that M. de Jouvenel had exaggerated the position in describing the radio as authoritarian and the newspaper as democratic. It was possible to turn the knob of the radio set and listen to a completely different program, whereas if one turned the pages of a newspaper one usually found the same opinion on all of them. Another difference was that one could do a great many other things, such as reading and writing while listening to the radio, whereas, when reading a newspaper, one's choice of other activities was limited to drinking a cup of tea or at most a glass of whisky. The one parallel activity that one could pursue better with a newspaper than with a radio was to fall asleep. The third point of difference was that radio ideas were received by the ear while newspaper ideas were

taken in by the eye. There was a Dutch proverb that something that goes in at one ear goes out at the other, but there was no parallel proverb that an idea entering by one eye could leave by the other. Reading was a better way of retaining an idea than listening to it. In the same way the radio might be a better instrument for attracting the attention of the public, but the press was a better instrument for retaining that attention.

M. de Jouvenel replied that he had not wished to give the impression that he was speaking ill of the radio. His point was simply that the radio made the choice for you, whereas the newspaper left you to make the choice for yourself.

Criticism Challenged

Mr. Eade challenged Dr. Commager's reference to the *News of the World* as "the worst paper" in Great Britain. Though he had no connection with the *News of the World* and was in a way in competition with it, he felt that he must correct an unfair and rather inaccurate statement about that paper. Whatever failings it had, he said, the *News of the World* could never be accused of distortion, inaccuracy or, indeed, sensationalism. The paper consisted of two main things—one of the best sporting services in Britain and very extensive reports on the crimes and follies of mankind, particularly in Britain. But it must also be remembered that while it reported crimes, it also reported the punishments. And it was a fact that for many years it had attracted signed contributions from some of the most distinguished people in Britain. Its main crime was that it had a bigger circulation than any other paper in the world. The fact that it went into one in every two homes in Britain was not a criticism or an indictment of the *News of the World*, but might be a criticism of the British people, if one took the view that it was a bad paper.

Dr. Commager said that Mr. Eade had been mistaken in thinking that he had singled out the *News of the World* as the worst paper. He had only observed, and would observe again, that there was a greater gap between papers like the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Times* on the one hand and the *News of the World* on the other, than there was between papers like *The New York Times* and the New York *Daily News* or *Daily Mirror*.

It was worth making the point, though it was a delicate matter, that the American press was less of a class press than the British, since the really great American newspapers had circulations reaching as far as most of the inferior and more sensational papers, in contrast with the

difference in circulations between good and less good newspapers in Britain.

MR. MARKEL (Sunday Editor, *The New York Times*) asked Dr. Commager what would be his basic program if he were editor of one of the university newspapers that he advocated.

Dr. Commager said that he would answer Mr. Markel and Sir Harold Nicolson at the same time. He looked at these problems in a practical rather than an abstract manner. One of the great newspapers of the world, *The Christian Science Monitor*, was already run by a church in the United States, and it was true that there were already in Britain university presses which were business organizations. What he had in mind was the same kind of general sponsorship of a newspaper or regulation of its standards through a university that existed in *The Christian Science Monitor* and the *Yale Quarterly*. He thought that what would emerge would not be a new type of paper so much as a general elevation of standards towards the level described by Dr. Röpke and others. Several major papers, including *The New York Times*, were in effect quasi-public institutions not conducted primarily with a view to newspaper economics.

Case of Eastern Europe

MR. B. WIERZBIANSKI (Free European Press Service, London) pointed out that, in the part of Eastern Europe to which he belonged, about 6,000 newspapers had disappeared in the last seven years, but at the same time about 4,000 new papers had appeared with a circulation 300 % larger than the old press had had before the last war. The new press was directed centrally and said more or less the same thing; reading it had become a daily part of school programs. In the light of this substantial difference between the press in his country before and since the war, he asked the chairman whether the press could be said to be gaining or losing its influence.

MR. ERKKO said that the problem fell outside the discussion of the press of the free world. In effect, the newspapers behind the Iron Curtain had been lost and that was a serious factor to be reckoned with, but it was a difficult question to discuss at that moment.

DR. M. ROOY (*Nieuwe Rotterdamse Courant*) said that the problem of the financial and intellectual possibility of publishing a high-level newspaper of the type suggested by Dr. Röpke varied from country to country. In some countries there was a real balance between the cost of production

of such a paper and the revenue from advertisements and subscribers. In other places the publication of a quality paper was linked with that of a popular paper and that was a possibility he asked editors to consider.

Dr. Röpke said the *Frankfurter Zeitung* had always had a great problem of survival, but he thought that its owners had applied what he might call the "melon on the dung-hill principle"; that was to publish a highly popular illustrated paper, the *Frankfurter Illustrierte*, and use part of its revenue to cover the cost of the *Zeitung*. The question of the reading public, however, had to be taken into consideration. A certain class of people was needed, able and willing to pay the subscription of such a paper.

MR. W. L. ANDREWS (*Yorkshire Post*, Leeds) thought that a wonderful opportunity was being missed of claiming, with full entitlement, that there had been an enormous gain in the influence of the press. Fifty years before, Britain's Foreign Office secrets had been regarded as almost too mystic for comprehension by the ordinary public. Since then the situation had been entirely transformed through the influence of the press, so that nowadays the British were very much better informed and becoming politically a much more mature nation. Surely that was the situation in almost every country in the world.

MR. S. J. GOLDSMITH (London Correspondent, *Haboker*, Tel Aviv) asked Sir Harold Nicolson how advertising influenced editorial policy in his opinion and whether, when he spoke of most newspapers supporting the Right, he included the Labor Party in the Right or the Left.

Sir Harold Nicolson replied that he did not know the answer to the first question as he had never been a newspaper proprietor or managing director. All that he would say was that in twenty years of writing for many papers on political and literary matters he had never encountered such interference from an advertiser. He would have been very angry if it had happened. As for the second question, he was not certain that he was right, because it was a complicated thing to work out, but he believed that if one took the circulation of all British newspapers, one would find that the majority were on what might be called the Right.

Too Sharp Distinctions

MR. ERWIN D. CANHAM (*The Christian Science Monitor*, Boston) said that while he had been complimented by the many generous references to the quality of his newspaper, he thought that a great deal of misunder-

standing had arisen during the discussion. It seemed to him that the speakers were introducing too sharp qualities and distinctions. He thought that it was on the whole a false quality assumption to say that a newspaper which communicated its ideas to a relatively small number of highly educated persons was performing a superior act of communication to a newspaper communicating to a large group of people of different interests, using different terms and different vocabularies. On the contrary, all newspapers were engaged in different forms of communication.

The modern newspaper was largely the result of the tremendous spread of literacy through education in most countries over the past century, but popular education had not brought a great number of people to the level where they were interested at once in highly specialized discussions. Newspapers written by professors for professors had their value, but there must be newspapers communicating to people where people lived, where they thought, where their ideas were best. That act of communication was exceedingly important and just as valuable in the whole process of education.

While he agreed that communication at the so-called mass levels could be improved, the same improvement was possible at other levels of communication. In his view, the ultimate test of a newspaper was the amount of ideas and reports of events it carried—that was, the data finally communicated to people; and to say that the presentation by a newspaper of a great number of ideas to a few people was a more important and successful process than the presentation of a few ideas to a large number of people was not an accurate analysis.

The art of reconciling the important with the interesting was difficult and called for daily compromise. One of the problems of the modern newspaper was the difficulty of talking to too many people at once.

Problem for Research

DR. A. E. YALMAN (*Vatan*, Istanbul) said that the panel speeches showed one point of agreement in that they all differentiated between the responsible and the sensational press. Since the International Press Institute had become a pool of responsible papers, he thought that the position of “responsible papers” should be added as a problem of Institute research. There was a threat against them and the threat should be studied by the Institute.

MR. C. S. OFTEDAL (*Stavanger Aftenblad*) asked M. de Jouvenel

whether he did not think that the enormous development of mass communications in recent decades called for a renaissance of the principles governing newspaper editorials. He thought that a better written press was called for, since the success of papers like the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Christian Science Monitor* was owing to the fact that they were using more and more personalities writing in their own way under their own names—personalities whom the public would trust.

M. de Jouvenel replied that he thought that explanatory writing was very important because “naked news,” if there was such a thing, meant nothing to the reader. In his view, an event always called for an explanation and a grouping together of the relevant facts. He also thought that this process, by giving the newspaper greater coherence, made it more interesting. The success of *Time* magazine and *Newsweek* was due to their putting things together, and he thought that they could teach a lesson in these matters even to newspapers which were better liked in a general way.

Referring to Dr. Yalman’s comments on responsible newspapers, M. de Jouvenel asked whether it was not very important not to allow a separation to grow up between the responsible and the less responsible press. He thought that the more popular press was very useful if it could be kept on the right lines by the inter-professional influence of the better papers. The desire of editors and contributors to the popular press to win the esteem of the most estimable members of the profession was perhaps the most excellent influence possible in a free press.

Financial Question

DR. R. HEINEN (*Kölnische Rundschau*) said that the creation of a high level newspaper depended on the social and economic structure of a country. In present-day Germany, where the intellectual worker’s income was hardly greater than that of an unskilled worker, there was not the public for a paper of that type. The *Frankfurter Zeitung* had been made possible not only by the publication of illustrated magazines by the same firm, but also by subsidies from the I.G. Farben Company. This raised the point whether a newspaper which was being financed by an industrial concern could maintain its absolute independence. This raised in turn the large question of the relation between the independence of the journalist and the financial conditions of newspapers. This was a problem particularly affecting the establishment of large newspapers.

He did not agree that to raise the level of a newspaper was automatically to lower its financial level.

Dr. Röpke replied that he was well aware of the influence in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* at the end of the 'twenties and in the 'thirties to which Dr. Heinen had referred. It was an extremely important question and illustrated the enormous difficulty of keeping such a paper independent. He was unable to say what editorial influence I. G. Farben had exercised, but such a connection was certainly very dangerous for any newspaper. While he personally would have wished that the *Frankfurter Zeitung* had not tried to keep alive under the Third Reich, he had been impressed by the courage with which the paper had fought to the limit of its possibilities against National Socialism.

Quality and Popular Press

Dr. Commager said that he would not challenge the observations made by Mr. Canham about quality and popular newspapers, but he wanted to raise questions about them. It seemed to him that the difference between the two types of press, according to Mr. Canham, was essentially quantitative, in that the one dealt with a large number of ideas of a complex order and the other with a small body of ideas of a somewhat simple order. That was true in one sense, but he did not think that Mr. Canham would assert for a moment that a body of ideas about whether the Boston Braves would be as good this year as they were last year was in the same category as the body of ideas in a speech by Sir Winston Churchill on foreign policy. The issue was not so much the quantitative difference between numbers of ideas and views as the qualitative difference in the importance of ideas and views.

This qualitative difference involved the whole question before the conference of whether it should look loosely and amiably at the irresponsible press and agree that it satisfied a great many people by giving them some very simple ideas. If the discussion was to have any meaning, this body of alleged ideas must be examined very critically to see whether they were worth the time and effort used to put them into newspapers and also whether they were sound or misguided. If it was concluded that a very large percentage of these ideas were merely misguided and misleading notions about political or international affairs, they had the right to challenge the whole argument which Mr. Canham, in his magnanimity, had used to excuse the failure of a considerable part of the American press to do the job it ought to do.

Mr. Markel said that he had been disturbed by Sir Harold Nicolson's references to what he had called the middle and low level papers and their lack of influence. He agreed that their impact on thought was not considerable, but he felt that their impact on the emotions was very important, especially in the field of international relations. Therefore, the Institute must pay attention to that aspect of their influence.

Mr. Canham said that he agreed with Dr. Commager in taking a firm stand against irresponsibility and everything undesirable. But the only point he had been trying to make was to say a word in favor of popularization, because he thought that that art was one of the greatest contributions that a newspaper could make, and sometimes it was possible through academic snobbery to confuse popularization with evil. It was easy to be contemptuous of people who have the daily imperative of making, somehow, a difficult compromise between the academically exact way of stating something and the sharp simplified terms which would get it into the minds of people who desperately needed to know it.

MR. ERIK BENGTTSSON (*Karlshamn Allehanda*) said that he wished to record his agreement with Mr. Andrews about the definite gain in the influence of the press. He also wished to say, as a representative of a Swedish provincial paper, that although they could not afford to keep their paper at a very high level, it did not pay in Sweden to lower the grade and turn the paper into a popular or yellow paper.

THE INSTITUTE'S POLICY AND PROGRAM

AFTERNOON SESSION—FRIDAY, MAY 15

Business Meeting

Chairman: LESTER MARKEL, Chairman of the Executive Board

THE CHAIRMAN said that the final business meeting had four items to dispose of—any further discussion of the program for the coming year, three resolutions put forward by members, the election of the Executive Board and the determination of the place of the 1954 Assembly.

Asked for further information about the proposal for regional meetings of editors to promote better understanding, he said that suggestions had been made for three such conferences—between the United States and Britain, Germany and France, and Greece and Turkey. It was understood that the expenses of such conferences would be borne by the newspapers concerned, unless it was considered that any of these meetings was so important as to justify a special grant towards it. He asked DR. URS SCHWARZ (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*) to make a short report on progress during the Assembly on the proposal for exchanges of journalists. Dr. Schwarz said that in many talks with members he had found general understanding and willingness to promote such exchanges. Most members did not want to commit themselves during the Assembly but accepted on the understanding that they could consult with their associates as to whether such exchanges were feasible.

The Director added that there had been four definite offers for exchanges made during the Assembly.

When the Chairman raised the question of a pilot project for underdeveloped areas, MR. W. D. CLARK (*The Observer*, London) said he welcomed what was being done and asked that the proposed investigation should try to discover not only what was needed but also how the Institute could help. His own newspaper had tried to help African students in Britain to learn something about British journalism, but he did not think it had succeeded because it did not have a very good system of dealing with people who came for three or four months. On the other hand, there were numerous requests for such opportunities to work for a short period on a London newspaper. He thought that, if the investigation could go very care-

fully into ways in which the best established nations could help the backward areas, the Institute could perhaps discover small practical ways to start helping inexpensively and quickly. Speed was the essence of anything done in this field.

The Chairman then raised the question of the Institute's part in investigating violations of press freedom and read a statement handed in by SIR LLOYD DUMAS (*The Advertiser*, Adelaide) before his departure that morning. The statement was as follows:

"That the Institute shall regard it as one of its primary purposes to watch for any international movement to restrict the freedom of the press or obstruct the free flow of news.

"That it shall study particularly all reports and activities of the United Nations and shall distribute as speedily as possible to all National Committees word of any proposal from this or any other source that seems to concern the general interest of the newspaper publishing industry.

"That, on the initiative either of the Director or of any National Committee, the Executive Board shall consider action on behalf of the Institute, and if unanimous, shall be authorized to speak for the Institute. In case the Executive Board is not unanimous, National Committees shall be informed and shall be free to act independently."

MR. NAGATAKE MURAYAMA (*Asahi Shimbun*, Tokyo) spoke on behalf of the seven Japanese delegates to the Assembly. He said that the Institute membership of 60 in Japan was a testimonial of the extent to which the new Japan was learning about press freedom. There had been instances during the past few years when governmental authorities had tried to suppress this freedom, but the collective will of the Japanese press had succeeded in maintaining its rights. The press of Japan placed great hope in the Institute as an instrument to keep the press of the world free.

The Popular Press

In further discussion of the general program MR. CHARLES FORREST (*Derby Evening Telegraph*) said that it was only during Friday morning's session that he felt that the popular press had received acknowledgment and recognition. He asked whether its existence could be remembered and something practical done by way of a study of its problems when the program for next year came to be discussed. There were many members, for example, those who were editors of British evening provincial papers, who came into the category (indicated that morning) between the top level

papers and the gutter press. It would be helpful if some professional study could be engaged in designed to attract the interest of the popular press. It was difficult to make a practical proposal but two possible suggestions for the 1954 Assembly were discussion of the recruitment and training of journalists or a discussion of their jobs by a representative panel of editors of popular papers.

The Chairman said that the point was well made and suggested that it should be included as a strong possibility for an IPI survey. He felt that during the Friday morning discussion Sir Harold Nicolson had underestimated greatly the influence of the popular press. Even if a failure of its impact on thought was conceded, its impact on emotion was very great and must be taken into account.

Publisher-Editor Relations

MR. F. ASCHINGER (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*) proposed that the 1954 General Assembly should discuss the problems of the freedom of the press from the inside as well as from the outside. By freedom of the press from the inside, he meant the relations between publishers and editors, between newspapers and political parties, if there were close links between a journal and a party, and perhaps between newspapers and trade unions, and so on. The freedom of the press from the outside dealt with the relation between the state and the press.

The Chairman and Director agreed that it would be considered as a topic for the next Assembly.

MR. ERWIN D. CANHAM (*Christian Science Monitor*, Boston) supported the proposal. He suggested that IPI REPORT should carry material about a book published recently in the United States, "The People's Right to Know," by Harold L. Cross, and that the Institute should study the question of whether or not similar activities to those of the American Society of Newspaper Editors to improve access to sources of news could be developed in other parts of the world. It had been felt for some years in the United States that doors were being closed to access to news events—such important things as meetings of school committees. This whole area had now been studied extensively and the result was as useful a crusade as American newspaper organizations had ever undertaken.

MR. A. P. WADSWORTH (*Manchester Guardian*) agreed that this was an interesting subject but asked if differences in national conditions were

not so great that it would be very hard to get any sort of consensus of view except in very broad terms. Mr. Canham agreed that there were innumerable differences, but there were also points in common. The principle was deep-seated and might be universal and any help that one country could give another should be given.

The Chairman asked whether there was a body in England comparable to the Freedom of Information Committee of the American Society of Newspaper Editors. MR. J. MURRAY WATSON (*The Scotsman*, Edinburgh) replied that there was no body exactly analogous but that the Institute of Journalists and the National Union of Journalists had been conducting inquiries over a number of years. He felt that conditions varied so much between countries that this was a national rather than an international problem. Mr. Canham said that he would be interested to learn through the IPI bulletin what the problem was in Great Britain and other countries.

The Chairman suggested that the editor of IPI REPORT examine the book and draw from it what might be generally applicable.

DR. AHMED EMIN YALMAN (*Vatan*, Istanbul) explained how he thought the original meeting between Greek and Turkish editors should be organized. The initiative should come from the Institute's Secretariat, but the plan was to have six Greek and six Turkish editors meeting alternatively in Ankara and Athens, in the presence of a member of the Secretariat.

Critics of the Press

MR. E. BENGTSOON (*Karlshamn Allehanda*) suggested that at the 1954 General Assembly it would be salutary for the Institute to have guest speakers who were more willing to attack the press. There were politicians and internationalists whose words carried great weight in the world and who often rightly criticized the press. Some of these people should be brought along to say what was wrong with the press from their point of view, so that the Institute might thereby have an opportunity of gauging the opinion of the general public.

MR. MARCEL STIJNS (*Het Laatste Nieuws*, Brussels) said that he thought it was time that the Institute studied all the criticisms that were brought against the press to find out whether newspapers were really as guilty as they were made out. The freedom of the press could not be defended unless full account was taken of what the public was being told about the functions of the press. It was often said that the influence of the press

was decreasing; they should investigate whether this was so and study the whole press. If they found it was not true they should react because such criticism had an effect not only on the readers of newspapers but on the economic conditions of the press.

The Chairman replied that he agreed fully in principle with the suggestion but it was a monumental undertaking to try to answer all criticisms of the press everywhere. Nevertheless he thought that such an investigation might be undertaken along specific lines.

Value to Publishers

DR. VINCENT NAESER (*Berlingske Tidende*, Copenhagen) said that he wished, as an observer and a newspaper proprietor, to state how much of value he had gained by attending the Assembly. He wished the Institute every success because, in his opinion, the best possible investment for any newspaper owner was to give economic support to the Institute's work. He had brought to the Assembly a note on the most decisive fronts that must be defended if freedom was to be upheld.

These were freedom from dictatorship, freedom guaranteed under the constitution, freedom from government and control, freedom from labor conflicts, freedom from restrictions on the editorial departments, freedom from obstacles to the flow of news and freedom from outside economic control. There were certain practical steps which he and his editor advocated for the Institute to obtain the largest possible financial support from owners.

He saw the Institute as a sort of general staff coordinating efforts in the battle to secure the freedom of the press. It seemed to him absolutely necessary that only editorial personnel should take an active part in the Institute's work. Under modern conditions the press had become a sort of monstrous jellyfish which stung but had no backbone. It was for the owners, editors and journalists to provide the backbone.

MR. S. J. GOLDSMITH (London Correspondent, *Haboker*, Tel Aviv) suggested that at some future date the Institute should examine the question of the influence of advertising or advertisers on the editorial policy of newspapers. The Chairman promised that this would be taken into consideration.

MR. HENNING SINDING-LARSEN (Secretariat) suggested that each National Committee should submit to the Secretariat a list of what they regarded as the best reference books on their national press which could

be used by newspapers abroad. These lists could then be circulated to all members by the Secretariat.

Mr. Wadsworth supported the suggestion on the ground that editors had difficulty in knowing what were the most up-to-date reference books in other countries. He also asked how much of the 1954 Assembly would be given to discussion of the findings of the projects already undertaken by the Institute. He thought that the Institute owed to its researchers the duty of giving their findings full discussion before moving into fresh fields.

The Chairman replied that the amount of discussion would depend entirely on what the final flow of the news survey showed. He proposed that the Secretariat should solicit recommendations for discussion topics for the next Assembly at the beginning of 1954.

Arrangement of Panels

MR. C. OFTEDAL (*Stavanger Aftenblad*) thought that there had been a considerable amount of overlapping in choice of panel speakers. Instead of having three or four speakers answering the same questions, he suggested it would be better if different but related questions were put to each speaker.

The Director agreed that the experience of the last two Assemblies showed that it was a mistake to have too many people of the same kind on the same panel. As to whether they should discuss different questions, he thought it was difficult because there had to be only one theme before the panel to prevent the discussion from getting out of hand.

The Chairman said that he considered it was largely a problem of briefing rather than one of numbers. There were enough problems for five people to handle provided that each one dealt with one part of the subject.

Dr. Schwarz thought it was enough to have one or two speakers on the panel and other people on the floor prepared to join in the discussion.

The Chairman asked the meeting what it thought of the plan of having four speakers at ten minutes each instead of two speakers at twenty minutes each.

MR. J. M. LUCKER (*De Volkskrant*, Amsterdam) thought that experience had shown that one quarter of an hour for each speaker was too short.

MR. FLOYD J. MILLER (*The Daily Tribune*, Royal Oak, Michigan) suggested that if speakers on the same topic knew in advance what other members of the panel were going to say, discussion would be more deliberate and in many fewer words.

The Chairman thought that the suggestion that each speaker be assigned one part of a single topic should be adopted.

MR. B. WIERZBIANSKI (Free European Press Service, London) suggested that the study of censorship and other restrictions on press freedom mentioned in the Director's report should be reported to the next General Assembly. The Chairman replied that it was proposed that the study should form an IPI survey, which might be the focus for discussion at the next Assembly.

Mr. Murray Watson suggested that instead of outsiders, they should put up some of their own leading members to talk on subjects they knew about. This might lead to a more profitable discussion. The Chairman agreed but thought it useful to find out what the reader was thinking. Mr. Wadsworth pointed out that the guest speakers this year and last were all men who wrote for newspapers.

Less General Discussion

PROF. H. TINGSTEN (*Dagens Nyheter*, Stockholm) thought that the next Assembly should concentrate more on particular journalistic and research problems and not on general talk from people who repeated things, in a more or less elegant manner, that members had known from childhood and were tired of hearing. During the two Assemblies in Paris and London members had heard of absurd misconceptions of the press which were allowed to pass without criticism. For example, during the Friday morning discussion, it had been said that the press should be objective, honest, free and independent and so on, but it had not been remembered that, as with all human institutions, the question was one of degree. They could not compare the press with the universities, the church or the schools. They must be independent of the state.

It was equally useless to discuss the value of the press or its political influence in vague general terms or to say that big newspapers were bad and small newspapers were good. All such statements required investigation and contradiction and they were good subjects to take up in Institute research and at annual meetings.

This failure to tackle newspaper problems in sufficiently concrete terms was, as he had already pointed out, a fault of the flow of the news survey. What should have been done was to investigate different papers in different countries on special questions to see how this paper and that paper treated this question and that. They could have done better by

examining fewer papers because then it would have been easier to make a qualitative analysis.

The Chairman replied that the flow of the news survey was well under way and its methods could not be changed at this stage, but he wished to reassure Professor Tingsten that the research was taking note of the quality as well as the quantity of the news.

Austrian Resolutions

On the closure of the discussion of the Institute's program, the Director read out the first of two resolutions submitted by MR. FRITZ MOLDEN (*Die Presse*, Vienna). The first was:

That in the interests of improving the flow of news between all parts of the world, the General Assembly

- (1) Favors the establishment in all countries of the lowest possible rates for the transmission of press traffic by cable, radio, telegraph and telephone, and therefore:
- (2) Requests the Executive Committee to direct the Permanent Staff of the International Press Institute to study the problem and to consult with all the authorities concerned, with a view to obtaining effective action on it.

The resolution was seconded by MR. E. PETAJANIEMI (*Ilta Sanomat*, Helsinki).

Mr. Canham said that, though it would no doubt be useful to carry the resolution, similar resolutions had been voted with enthusiasm at every international newspaper gathering he had attended since 1927. He thought that it would be better for the Institute to limit its activity to resolutions on matters strictly relating to its own internal problems.

The Chairman replied that the policy of voting resolutions had been determined largely at a meeting of National Committee chairmen on the previous day. While he sympathized with Mr. Canham's view in general, he thought that the second part of the resolution, directing the Institute's Secretariat to study the problem, gave the resolution new weight.

The resolution was carried with four dissenting voices.

The Director then read the second resolution in the name of Mr. Molden as follows:

That in the interest of the free flow of news and to facilitate freedom of movement for foreign correspondents, the General Assembly recommends:

The Executive Committee direct the Permanent Staff of the International Press Institute to examine measures which could be taken to create a separate internationally recognized passport for accredited foreign correspondents, enabling them to move quickly to all countries recognizing such document.

It was seconded by MR. V. K. NARASIMHAN (*The Hindu*, Madras).

Explaining his resolution, Mr. Molden said that he was well aware that it dealt with a complicated problem which the Institute's Secretariat could hardly be expected to solve, but he thought that the matter should be examined so that it could be brought up at the 1954 Assembly with the Secretariat's recommendations. Other organizations could be consulted and in that way, little by little, a solution might be reached.

The Director suggested that the resolution might be altered to ask the Secretariat to consult with other bodies that were active on this matter and Mr. Molden and Mr. Narasimhan agreed to a rewording of the phrase "to examine measures which could be taken" to read "to examine measures which are being or could be taken."

The resolution was carried with one dissenting voice.

Vote of Condemnation

The Director then read the following resolution proposed by Mr. Marcel Stijns:

Whereas the Government of General Perón has continued the suppression of independent newspapers in Argentina which was so fatally symbolized in the liquidation of *La Prensa*;

Whereas the Government of Argentina has threatened the dissemination of information to and from the outside world;

Whereas the International Press Institute stands firmly against all interference with the flow of information, the expression of opinion or the personal liberties of editors in Latin America or any other part of the world:

Now, therefore, the International Press Institute condemns the Government of Argentina for its repeated blows against the freedom of the press and calls on editors throughout the world to protest in the name of their liberties.

The resolution was seconded by DR. OSCAR POLLAK (*Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Vienna).

Speaking to the motion, Mr. Oftedal said that while he favored the

idea behind the resolution, the Assembly should be cautious about what it said and when it said it and should carry a resolution not merely for the sake of carrying it, but for the effect. As he understood the present resolution, its only effect would be to say that the Institute was carrying a motion but it would not have any real effect. Therefore he opposed it.

Proof of Alertness

MR. P. G. BELTRAN (*La Prensa*, Lima) did not agree with Mr. Oftedal. He thought that the resolution would carry a great deal of weight although perhaps not so much in rectifying what had happened. Account should be taken of the effect it might have in preventing other governments from following the same course as the Government of Argentina. Further, the resolution would show the world at large that the Institute was not merely an academic body out of touch with conditions and interested in the study of things without practical application but a body watching what went on and alive to the dangers threatening the press. This was a fundamental problem because, wherever press freedom was restricted in a country, the problem of the flow of the news ceased entirely to interest anybody in that country. If the Institute did not act, it would be assumed that the Institute had no real interest in the matter.

When Mr. Miller asked whether the meeting could have some facts about the situation in Argentina, Mr. W. McNeil Lowry, the Associate Director, read out a record of attacks on the press in Argentina since the suppression of *La Prensa*, compiled by the Institute's Press Center in Zurich.

Mr. Miller said that, as a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Press Association, he had been very closely interested in the problem for many years and he could testify that these actions did have effect. Mr. Oftedal said that, after listening to Mr. Beltran, he was convinced of the usefulness of the motion which was then put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

The Assembly passed to the election of the Executive Board and the Director said that there had been no nominations from members for the one vacancy on the Executive Board. The re-election of the entire Board and the election of G. DE BENEDETTI (*La Stampa*, Turin) to the vacancy on the Board were carried unanimously.

The Chairman, Mr. Lester Markel, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Dr. Urs Schwarz and Mr. Kasturi Srinivasan, were re-elected.

The meeting dealt next with the place of the 1954 General Assembly. The Director said that two suggestions had been made, one a city in Asia and the other Vienna. Though the Executive Board believed that a meeting in Asia was desirable, attendance might be small and so the Board favored Vienna. Dr. Yalman said that he had been charged by the Turkish National Committee to propose Istanbul, but they did not wish to enter competition with Vienna. He suggested Istanbul for the following year.

Mr. Oftedal said that he had been commissioned by the Norwegian National Committee to propose Copenhagen but, as Vienna had been proposed, he wished only to mention the possibility of going to Scandinavia in the future. The decision to meet in Vienna was then approved unanimously.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Markel for his chairmanship of the Assembly and to the Director and the Secretariat for their work during the year was proposed by Mr. Charles Eade (*Sunday Dispatch*, London) and seconded by Mr. S. J. Goldsmith.

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